



STEVENAGE CENTRAL

TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK

JUNE 2015





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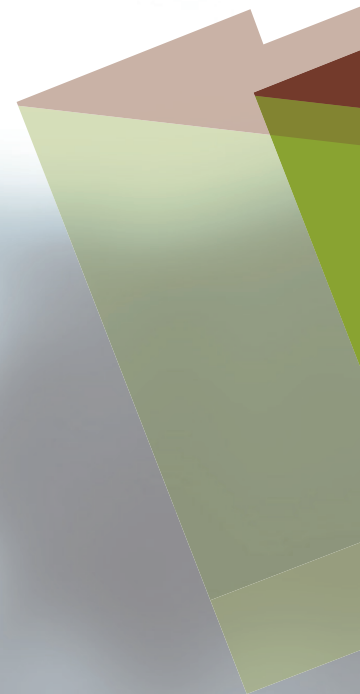
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Interactive Document

When viewed on screen this document has interactive functions



Introduction



Town Centre Gardens

INTRODUCTION

What is the Stevenage Central Framework?

- i. The Stevenage Central Framework is the overarching regeneration strategy for the development of the centre of Stevenage including the establishment of investment priorities, partnership working and physical interventions over the next twenty five years. The aim of the Framework is to make sure that Stevenage Central once more plays as full a role as possible in the lives of Stevenage residents, ensuring that it becomes the place that provides real and tangible benefits for the wider population of the district and the wider region.
- ii. Stevenage Central Framework is not a Statutory Plan, that role will be fulfilled by the Local Plan. Rather, it is partly a prospectus for investment and delivery in the town centre that will allow all parties to unite and capitalise upon the potential for Stevenage. Stevenage Central Framework has been prepared by Stevenage Borough Council and Stevenage First in consultation with a range of stakeholders on behalf of everyone who has an interest in Stevenage and its future.

Components of the Stevenage Central Framework

- iii. The Stevenage Central Framework is made up of complementary and interlinked components:

Part 1 - Stevenage Central

This sets out the position today, the drivers for change and ambitions for Stevenage Central in the context of the New Town heritage.

Part 2 - The Regeneration Plan

The Regeneration Plan translates the vision and principles for Stevenage Central into an integrated framework for change. It draws together the analysis to underpin an ambitious and flexible spatial proposition supported by a series of thematic interventions and development projects. In summary, the Regeneration Plan:

- » provides a single over-arching working plan for Stevenage Central, resolving conflicts, finding synergies and setting out a common purpose;
- » shapes regeneration priorities and identifies defined projects that together will deliver the over-arching plan; and
- » establishes the basis for assessing the cumulative impacts of the proposed regeneration on the future role of Stevenage.

Part 3 - The Delivery Plan

The Stevenage Central Delivery Plan sets out a clear route map for change. It provides a robust strategy for the delivery of the Regeneration Plan and the interventions and projects that are proposed. The Delivery Plan includes details on:

- » viability;
- » sequencing;
- » funding;
- » action planning;
- » delivery responsibilities; and
- » future management and partnership.

Part 4 - The Evidence Base

- » The final part of the Stevenage Central Framework is the Evidence Base that underpins the proposals set out in the Regeneration Plan. It brings together the findings of a broad range of work that has been carried out by a number of bodies with original analysis to provide a comprehensive picture of the town today and importantly the issues and opportunities moving forward using a SWOT analysis.

Structure diagram of framework overleaf

Using the Stevenage Central Framework

The Regeneration Plan

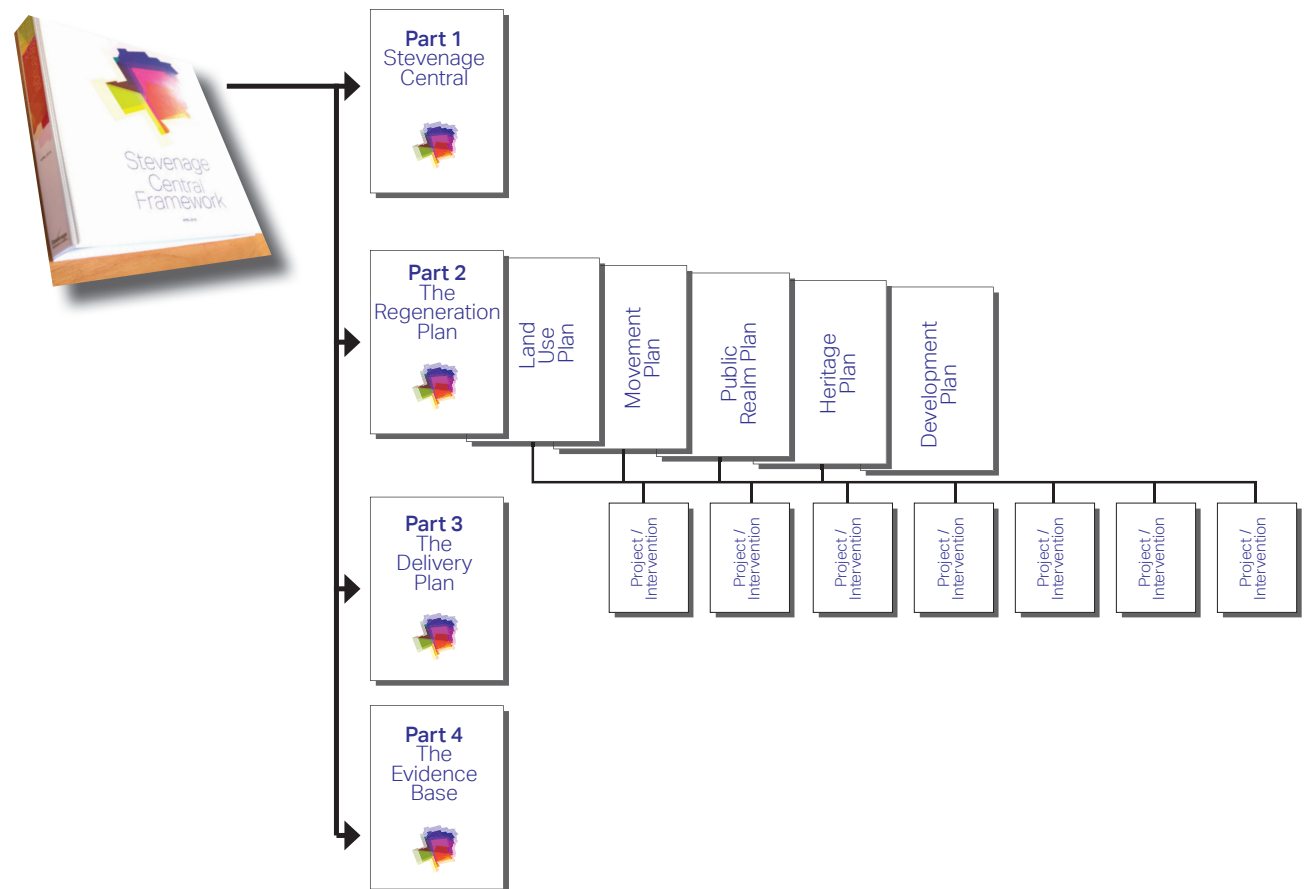
- iv. The Stevenage Central Framework is an integrated set of proposals and projects to achieve the vision and ambitions for the town. The Regeneration Plan acts as the key spatial diagram showing the interrelationships between the various interventions being put forward. All other elements of the document should be read in conjunction with the Regeneration Plan drawing.

Thematic Plans & Projects

- v. The component themes of the Regeneration Plan are:
 - » Stevenage Central Land Use Plan
 - » Stevenage Central Movement Plan
 - » Stevenage Central Public Realm Plan
 - » Stevenage Central Heritage Plan
 - » Stevenage Central Major Opportunity Areas
- vi. Under each theme the regeneration aims and principles are set out in terms of the contribution to the overall ambitions for Stevenage Central. Key interventions and projects are identified and presented on pro-forma setting out the proposition in each case, parameters and delivery issues/viability.

- vii. This allows individual themes or projects to be abstracted from the Framework as needed. This will provide a flexible working document that can be used by policy makers, funders and delivery agents to secure change.

Fig 1.1 Structure Diagram of Framework





Part 1

Stevenage Central

1



The Joyride Statue

PART 1 – STEVENAGE CENTRAL

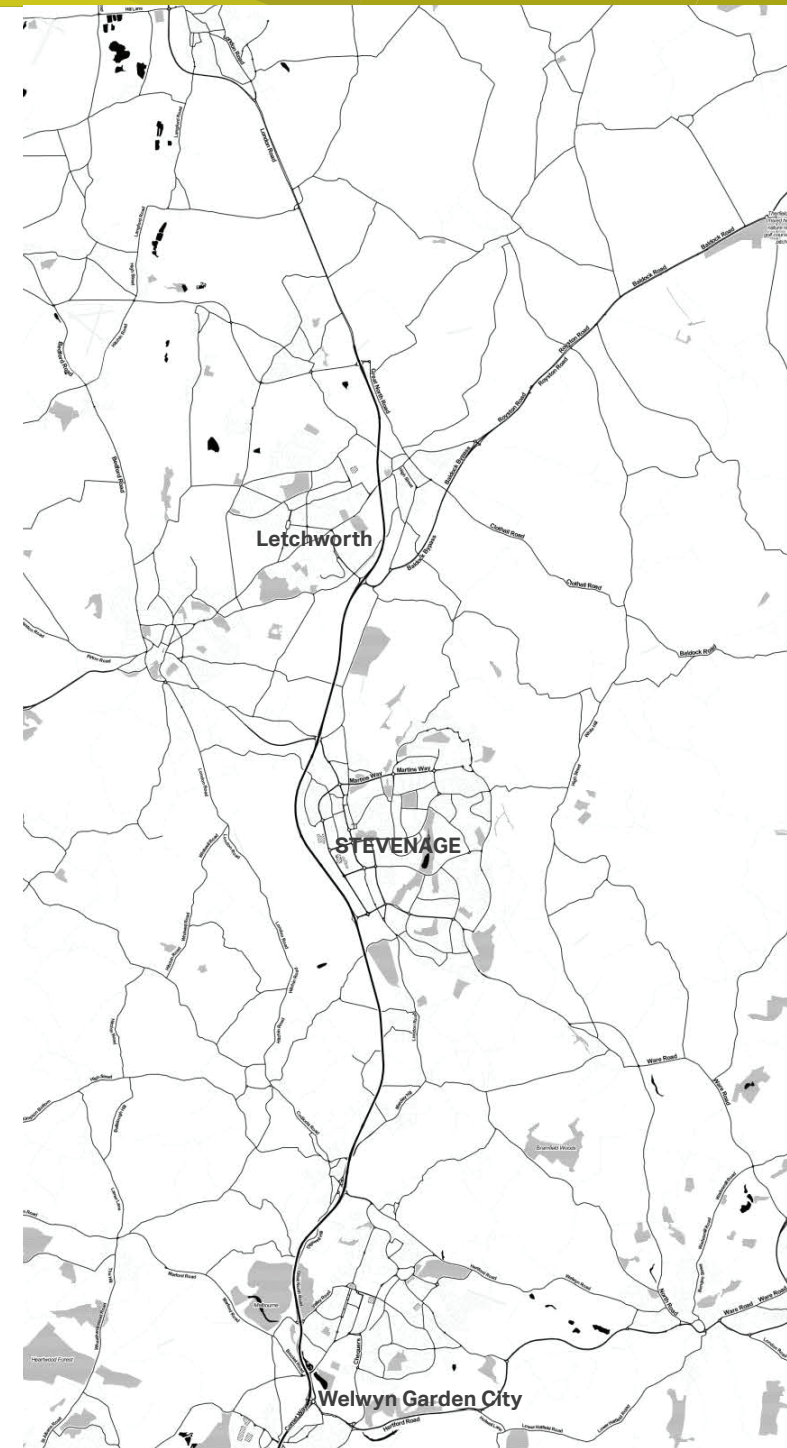
1.1 Stevenage today

Stevenage Heritage

1.1.1 Stevenage was the UK's first New Town in 1946. The Town Square (and its environs) was designated as a Conservation Area because it was the UK's first wholly pedestrianised town centre which remains as an unaltered 'New Town' centre. The Conservation Area contains the two listed structures of The Clock Tower and the Joyride statue which are both Grade II Listed and located within the Town Square. The New Town heritage has shaped a distinctive town centre and continues to influence the character and sense of place in Stevenage today.

Stevenage Location

- 1.1.2** Stevenage is located within Hertfordshire in the East of England. It is located between Letchworth Garden City to the north and Welwyn Garden City to the south. Luton is 15 miles to the west and St Albans is located 17 miles to the south-west.
- 1.1.3** The town is strategically connected by train. London King's Cross Station can be accessed in approximately 20 minutes by using the fastest trains with morning peak period frequencies of up to 10 minutes. Other key rail destinations include Moorgate, Letchworth, Cambridge, Peterborough and Newcastle.
- 1.1.4** Due to the proximity to the A1 (M), Stevenage has excellent road connections at a regional level including Northampton (60mins), Peterborough (55mins) and Cambridge (45mins). The North of Stevenage is accessed via the A1 (M) junction 8 and the South of the town via junction 7.



Stevenage Location



Stevenage Town Square

Stevenage Population

- 1.1.5 Stevenage New Town was originally designed to serve a population of 60,000 to be achieved by 1980. In 1955 the target for the town was increased to 80,000 within the original timescale but with no increase in the size of the proposed town centre.
- 1.1.6 The resident population of Stevenage at the last census was some 84,000 with a built up area population of 90,000. Population Forecasts predict a baseline increase in the total population over a 25 year period reaching 92,860 by 2035. Within this overall increase, the working age population is set to increase by 5 to 6%.
- 1.1.7 In terms of the socio economic profile¹ for Stevenage there is a balance of groups including Wealthy Executives, Secure Families, Post Industrial Families and Struggling Families. Household spending is identified as being above UK and East of England averages.
- 1.1.8 Stevenage is tightly bounded to its urban area. Therefore the impacts of growth in surrounding districts will have a significant influence on the Borough and, importantly, the town centre.

¹ See Stevenage Central Baseline Report 2015

Stevenage Economy

- 1.1.9** The economy of Stevenage has grown over the past 15 years, exceeding both the regional and national average. This reflects the knowledge based industries present including companies such as Airbus and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK). In terms of sector strengths, Stevenage has performed higher than the national average in Healthcare, Business Services, R&D, Computer related, Metals manufacturing, Electronics, Wholesale, Transport manufacturing and telecoms.
- 1.1.10** About 80% of employment land in Stevenage is located within Gunnels Wood, one of the original New Town employment areas, and now the largest employment site in Hertfordshire. Stevenage is relatively entrepreneurial with high business birth and death rates compared to National and Hertfordshire averages.
- 1.1.11** The Borough is a modest net importer of labour (with a net inflow in the order of 2,180 workers - 5% of its workforce) specifically in higher value sectors.

Stevenage Town Centre

- 1.1.12** Retailing is the predominant land use within Stevenage town centre. The town competes with higher order centres such as Milton Keynes and those offering a differing quality such as Hitchin and St. Albans. These centres are readily accessible by Stevenage residents. Leisure uses, restaurants, cafes and drinking establishments in the town centre are very limited, with the evening economy catered for elsewhere within the Old Town and the Leisure Park.
- 1.1.13** A large majority of the land within the town centre is owned by the public sector. Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) owns much of this and is continuing to acquire more land/properties to enable regeneration.
- 1.1.14** At the same time, the regeneration of the town centre is now a stated priority for SBC, Stevenage First and the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), with significant public monies now identified to help secure significant change.



The Westgate Shopping Centre



1.2. The Drivers for Change

- 1.2.1 Stevenage is affected to a greater or lesser extent by the economic, demographic, retail and market forces that impact on other town centres. It is the particular local characteristics of Stevenage that determine which are most significant and what responses/interventions should be made.

Embracing Growth

- 1.2.2. There is a clear appetite for change typified by the investment in time and resources made by SBC and its partners, the formation of Stevenage First and the commitment of the LEP. The town's clear willingness to embrace and plan for further growth will enable it to attract additional growth funding. These growth ambitions are supported by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and the LEP. Some £15 million of investment funding is already committed – these are essentially the pump-priming monies required to begin the regeneration process.

Loyalty and Commitment

- 1.2.3 The people of Stevenage continue to show great loyalty to their town centre in spite of the difficulties and changes to the retail market. This loyalty and commitment provides a good basis for changing the function of the town centre. The opportunity to introduce a wider mix of activities into the town centre and change the balance of activities must now be embraced to ensure that Stevenage Central can once again effectively meet the needs of its population.

Looking back to Look forward

- 1.2.4. The new town heritage provides a unique development ethos and context. Whilst the modernist new town architecture does not appeal to all, the formal structure of the town centre with its pedestrian streets, public spaces and defined vistas, provides a clear framework for selective redevelopment. A considerable area of the centre remains in public ownership which strengthens the public sector influence and leverage in development projects. The formality of the town centre is complemented by the historic and informal Old Town High Street which provides a distinct retail offer to the town centre, in an environment where independent retailers can flourish. Taken together the two locations provide real strength in depth.

Re-capturing Value

- 1.2.5. Stevenage is located within an affluent area and is home to numerous well paid professional jobs, with many located in companies with an international profile within the Gunnel's Wood employment area. Success in retaining and attracting more of this obvious spending power and seeing it spent in Stevenage Central will stimulate investment in retail and leisure sectors. There is an affluent and growing population in the Borough with potential to capture greater spend. It is the strength, diversity and dynamism of the local economy that differentiates Stevenage from its competitors.

Stimulating Development

- 1.2.6. The private sector is actively pursuing development opportunities and preparing redevelopment proposals. This interest and activity is to be welcomed and encouraged. It is a clear sign that Stevenage is on the radar of the development sector. The level of ambition will be raised further when the scale of opportunity reaches a wider audience. The investment spin-offs of the large scale development opportunities available near the station can further stimulate development activity particularly when part of an overarching plan for change.

Making the Most of our Connections

- 1.2.7. Rail accessibility to London and other locations continues to improve. Future investment in Thameslink and Crossrail and in the East Coast rail line is programmed, with significant investment planned for the rail infrastructure in Stevenage to provide a new platform and improve line capacity. The fastest journey times to London are now down to less than 20 minutes. London's overheated housing market means that there is a growing market for affordable housing for young professionals in a ring of towns around London.
- 1.2.8. There is space around the station to provide a new public transport interchange with a relocated bus station. The realistic opportunities for transport related development in the ring of towns surrounding London is limited. Reading provides a clue as to how investment in transport can provide the catalyst for major development proposals. The impressive and intelligent redevelopment around Kings Cross would appear to offer significant potential to develop both housing and employment linkages.

Providing the right Opportunities

- 1.2.9. Regeneration requires plentiful land that is genuinely development ready. There are significant land parcels in public ownership that can be quickly readied for development. This provides an enormous competitive advantage because the complexities of land assembly delays and frustrates many schemes. In addition, the space devoted to road carriageways and car parking is disproportionate and rationalisation and reconfiguration can provide more development land.

Maximising Public Sector Investment

- 1.2.10 The public sector is seeking to rationalise and focus service provision in various ways. There are proposals by the NHS and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) to invest in new buildings in the town centre. This will both create a property requirement and release potential development land. Properly located and housed in well-designed buildings, these requirements have the potential to attract more people into the town centre and stimulate change. Similarly, proposals to rationalise leisure provision create further opportunity for positive change.

1.3. Our Ambition

1.3.1 The Town Motto for Stevenage is as follows:

“The Heart of a Town lies in its people”

This is fundamental to the New Town philosophy and the way in which Stevenage was originally planned and developed through the 1950's and 60's. The town centre was specifically located to the south of the original High Street and designed to become the retail, commercial, administrative and social heart of the New Town.

1.3.2. Design principles for the town centre reflected this ambition for Stevenage with the core pedestrianised streets serving the retail provision. These are surrounded by municipal and civic buildings including SBC, the library, magistrate's courts, register office, health clinics and the Arts and Leisure centre including the municipal theatre all designed into the heart of the town.

1.3.3. The centre was served by effective transport links including the Ring Road to enable cars to access retail and services, but also for public transport with the bus station being located at the heart of the town centre adjacent to the main square.

1.3.4. The town centre that evolved from these principles served Stevenage well for many years. However, the wider economic context has changed and if the centre is to find the same place at the heart of its people, then change is now required.

New Town, New Future

- 1.3.5. In planning for the future of Stevenage Central, the commitment to the original New Town motto remains firm. However, the town centre has not kept pace and no longer reflects the requirements and ambitions of residents and visitors alike.
- 1.3.6. The Stevenage Central Framework is targeted at addressing this issue through the effective translation of the original New Town motto and principles into a bold new vision and Regeneration Plan for 21st Century Stevenage that directly addresses the drivers for change identified above.
- 1.3.7. Our vision for the future of Stevenage is therefore as follows:

Stevenage Central Vision Statement

In the early 1960's Stevenage town centre was brand new - bright, modern and cutting edge. It exemplified the ethos for the town, which was to deliver a vibrant economy alongside decent housing and excellent public spaces.

Our vision is to reinvigorate the centre of Stevenage so that it once again represents the aspirations of its people and makes provision for the opportunities they seek.

Stevenage was, and should be again, a destination town centre with a combined retail, leisure and residential offer that will meet the needs of our population, and attract visitors well into the future.

We need to recognise the huge changes that are underway in terms of retailing and what people are seeking in their leisure time. We also need to build on the traditional role our town centre has played in being a meeting place and central hub for our community.

1.3.8. This vision is supported by ten principles/ ambitions which reflect the way in which we believe Stevenage now needs to emerge. These are as follows:

1. Stevenage will be a destination town centre with an 'extended day' offer. A wide variety of shops, including independent retailers, which will meet modern demands (such as click & collect), and leisure, such as restaurants, will be absolutely essential.
2. We will create a new community in the town centre by a significant increase in the number of residential units available. We plan to create a whole new housing market, by attracting rail commuters for whom the prices in London are now out of reach.
3. We will develop attractions unique to this part of Hertfordshire/Bedfordshire – perhaps a 'Stevenage Eye' or winter ice skating rink. These will have wide, family appeal and attract a clientele to play, shop and eat.
4. A new 'public sector hub' in the middle of the town will provide a one stop shop for all public sector services. This will focus on a new-style library, drop-in health centre (with the emphasis on preventative health), access to all but back-office council services etc.

5. There will be good, usable, high quality public space and there must be a new green space within the Ring Road.
6. There will be a public transport centre that links train and bus services in a way that is accessible and makes sense to people. A new, or significantly refurbished Rail Station will act as a hub for short- and long-distance services north-south and east-west.
7. To halt its unwelcome dominance, we will 'break' the Ring Road collar around the centre, allowing easy, surface-level pedestrian access east-west from Gunnels Wood to Bedwell. Just inside the Ring Road, we will redevelop a number of our surface level car parks to provide for other purposes, whilst the remaining car parks will be intensified to ensure that there are adequate spaces to accommodate short- and long-stay parking needs.

8. There will be clear public transport, cycle and walking links between the town centre and the complimentary 'offers' available in the High Street, the Leisure Park and the retail warehouse parks (principal amongst which is Roaring Meg). A green bridge link from the town centre to the High Street and a new hopper-type carbon neutral bus link are vital.
9. We will adopt high standards of maintenance, comprehensive on-going management and promotion & marketing of the revamped centre.
10. High design standards will be applied throughout. New buildings will be complimentary to, and respectful of, the best of the centre's New Town heritage. A clear and coherent design guide will lay down what is expected of developers and other stakeholders

1.3.9. These ambitions provide the rationale for the Stevenage Central Framework. The Vision and Principles are reflected in the Regeneration Plan.



Part 2

The Regeneration Plan

2



PART 2 - THE REGENERATION PLAN

2.1. Scope and Definition

2.1.1 Three concepts inform the scope and definition of the Regeneration Plan:

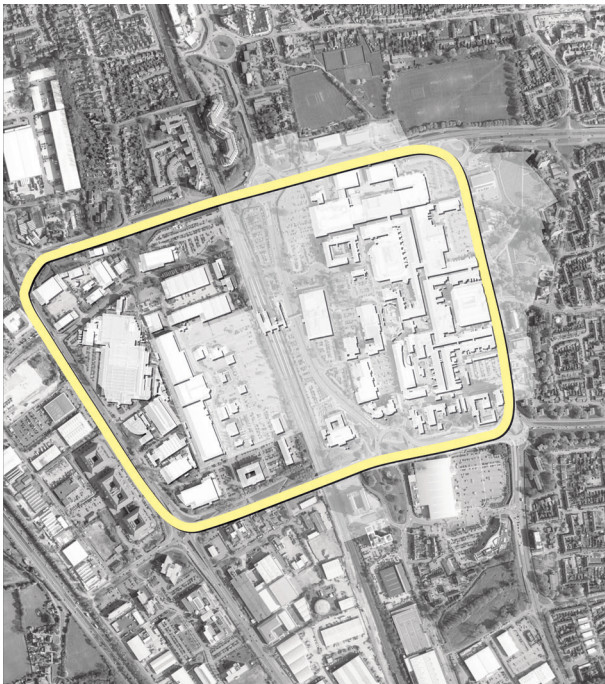
- » Defining Stevenage Central
- » Connecting Stevenage Central
- » Developing Stevenage Central

The Three Concepts

Defining Stevenage Central - 'Room to Breathe'

- 2.1.2 The Town Centre of Stevenage was established more than 50 years ago through the initial development of the New Town.
- 2.1.3 This town centre boundary has remained largely unchanged and has served Stevenage well. However, it is clear that the time is now right to address the spatial extent of Stevenage Central through this Framework.

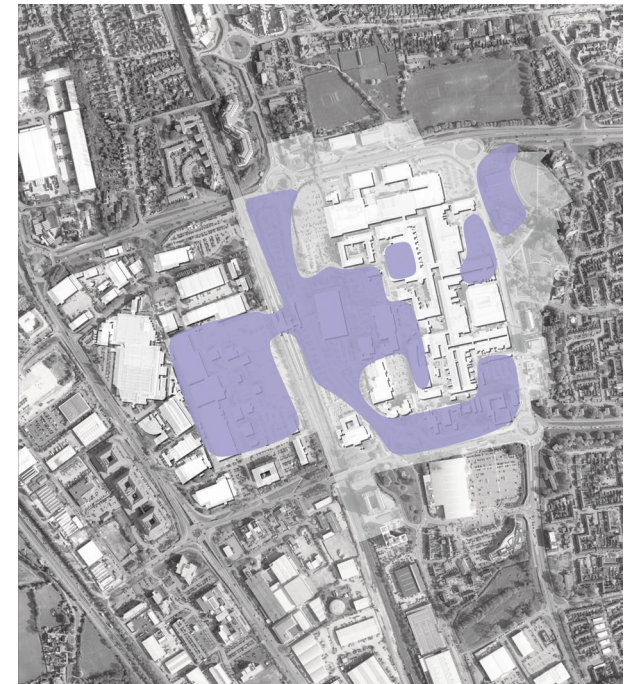
2.1.4 Stevenage Central now needs to find room to breathe in order to create the opportunity and flexibility for change, to better connect with complementary locations such as the Old Town and to reflect population that it now serves. The following factors indicate that in planning for the next 25 years, consideration of land beyond the current confines of the Ring Road must be at the heart of the Regeneration Plan.



Defining the Centre



Key Connections



Major Opportunity Areas

1. *Meeting the needs of a Growing Population*

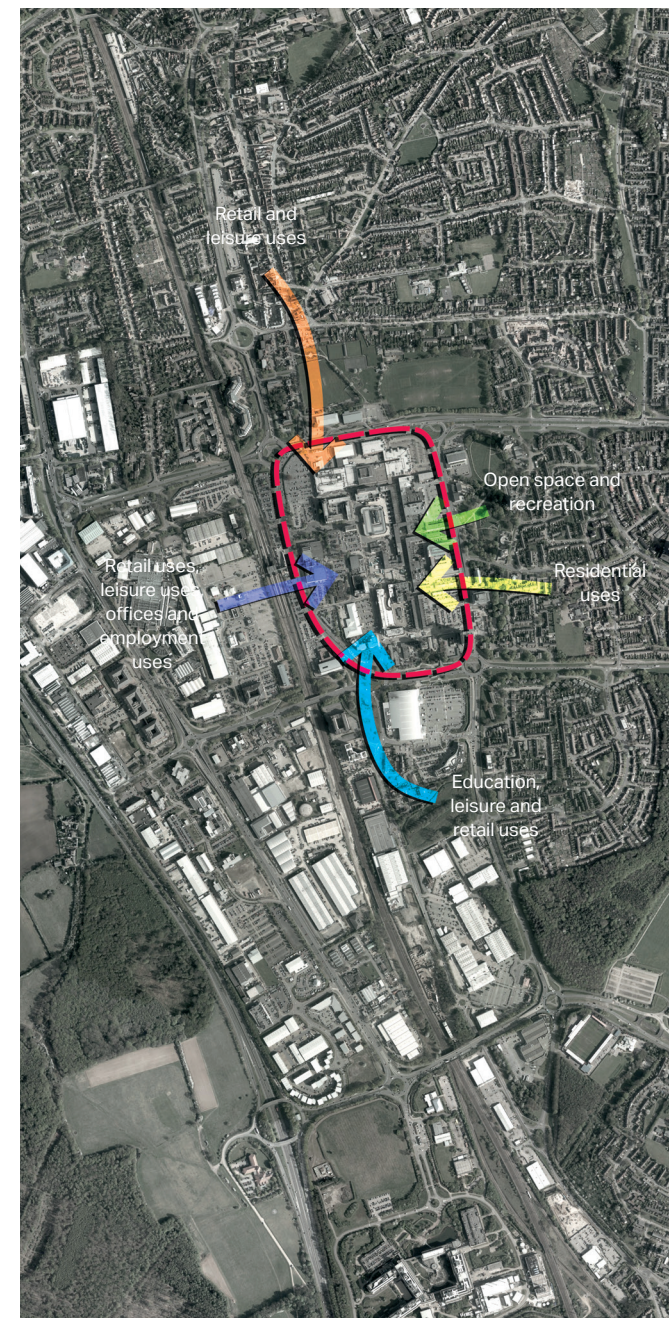
- 2.1.5** Stevenage New Town was originally designed to serve some 60,000 population to be achieved by 1980. In 1955 the housing target for the town was increased to 80,000 within the original timescale but with no increase in the size of the proposed town centre.
- 2.1.6** The resident population of Stevenage at the last census was some 84,000 with a built up area population of 90,000. The Stevenage Population Forecasts predict a baseline increase in the total population over a 25 year period reaching 92,860 by 2035.

Stevenage today is serving a much higher population than originally planned for. The growth within the Borough means that the population will have grown by 50% over the original new town but with no growth in the town centre. At the same time considerable growth around Stevenage will provide additional opportunities to capture spend.

2. *Creating a better Connected Centre*

- 2.1.7** The limitations of the current town centre have already been felt in Stevenage as key uses have left to find the space and offer that they need. Retail has moved out to Roaring Meg, leisure uses have jumped the Ring Road to the adjacent Leisure Park, the College has relocated to the south of the centre and many of the evening economy activities that could and should be located in the centre have migrated to Old Town.

In planning for the Regeneration of Stevenage Central there is now a need to be more outward looking for the centre making connection to these locations and in some cases bringing them under the umbrella of a Stevenage Central approach.



3 *Delivering the Right Opportunities*

- 2.1.8 The analysis undertaken suggests there is market interest in investing in Stevenage and indeed some of this is becoming a reality. However, many of the sites that have been identified to date are complex, require demolitions, land assembly and are therefore less straightforward in delivery terms. In providing for the qualitative improvements required in Stevenage there is a parallel need to create new development opportunities that will be attractive to the market, particularly at key locations such as the Rail Station.

The Regeneration of Stevenage Central is dependent on bringing in new investment and a qualitative step change. This requires the right sites to be brought forward and a wider view to therefore be taken.

4 *Reflecting a Shift in Gravity*

- 2.1.9 The leap of the main leisure uses in the town across Lytton Way and railway to the Leisure Park is a significant step. It is clear that in providing new opportunities and securing regeneration in Stevenage there will need to be a gravitational shift westward from the current and historic town centre core. This is already happening and a key challenge for the Regeneration Plan is to harness this investment and ensure that changes meet the Vision and regeneration requirements, including securing a sustainable future for the historic centre.

The gravitational pull of the town centre westward must be recognised and effectively planned for as an integral element of Stevenage Central rather than continuing as a place apart.

- 2.1.10 For these reasons, the Regeneration Plan has re-defined the extent of Stevenage Central as a vital first step in delivering regeneration and change.



Stevenage Leisure Park

Connecting Stevenage Central

2.1.11 It is vital to the regeneration of Stevenage Central that it is better connected to those that live and work in the town. The town centre currently operates largely in isolation from other key locations such as Gunnels Wood employment area, Roaring Meg Retail Park, the Old Town and to a lesser degree, the Leisure Park.

2.1.12 The Ring Road has become an issue in this respect and as stated in the vision and regeneration principles, reconfiguration of the Ring Road is a fundamental requirement of the Regeneration Plan. The approach to the Ring Road and creation of meaningful connections for a wider Central Area requires more significant interventions, particularly in terms of Lytton Way.

2.1.13 The connectivity issues for Stevenage Central are not limited to reconfiguring the Ring Road. The distances between the centre, Gunnels Wood, Old Town and Roaring Meg are considerable and imaginative and targeted approaches are required to ensure that these complementary offers can be linked and provide cumulative benefits.

The town centre is physically, functionally and emotionally separated from other activities such as business and leisure. These connections need to be made to enable the benefits of these locations to be felt.

Lytton Way



Developing Stevenage Central

2.1.14 Stevenage remains a significant commercial centre in Hertfordshire with good connectivity and major businesses but poor external perceptions deter investment. The opportunity for Stevenage is to provide both a physical and can do environment for future investment. This means a clear vision of what is needed, definition of projects and sites that support diversity and investment.

2.1.15 The performance of Stevenage Central in the wider economy is also key to providing an enhanced residential offer and providing an environment attractive to potential new residents. The quality of the town centre is also fundamental to Stevenage as a business investment location.

2.1.16 The resilience of Stevenage Central depends on offering a convenient location to fulfil a range of requirements that reflect the changing nature of town centres and the requirements of their users. This demands the creation of new sites and opportunities that are attractive to the market. Given the reported viability issues of key schemes such as the Plaza and Park Place there is a need to consider opportunities other than those identified, including undeveloped land and sites with lower site assembly costs.

The approach to development in Stevenage Central will reflect the gravitational shift of the centre towards the Rail Station facilitated by the re-consideration of key infrastructure and public assets in this location as providing attractive development opportunities with the best chance of market success.



2.2. The Regeneration Plan Explained

2.2.1 The Regeneration Plan seeks to create new sites that are attractive to anticipated market demands. Footloose office and commercial inquiries are scarce in current market conditions and only a few locations outside London have realistic hope of securing these inquiries. The intention is to make Stevenage into just such a competitive centre and the availability of “oven ready” sites is a pre-requisite to secure investment. The Regeneration Plan defines Major Opportunity Areas (MOAs) which will be the focus for investment by the public and private sectors, with subsequent major planning applications. The Plan is based upon a series of bold interventions required to match the scale of ambition for Stevenage Central.

2.2.2 There is greater current demand for residential development and Hertfordshire as an area with a demonstrable shortage of housing and residential sites. Pressure to release green field sites is intense. Stevenage Central has the potential to minimise the need for greenfield sites. The creation of a new Stevenage central Community is critical to the success of the Plan. This relates not only to the provision of new, high quality homes, but also to the delivery of the appropriate facilities, services and spaces to serve these communities. Evidence of demand is proven through recent planning applications, prior notification approvals (changing use from redundant office space to residential units) and capacity exercises sponsored by SBC. Stevenage can reassert its influence on and importance to the Hertfordshire economy and housing market.

2.2.3 The Regeneration Plan is focussed, therefore, on creating sites that can be used for different uses dependent upon policy and demand. This approach can be translated into policy by use of floorspace ranges.

2.2.4 The Regeneration Plan puts the Station at the centre of Stevenage Central. The station area should become the place where the new physical structure for the centre is focused. Many of the key streets and linkages in the existing town centre follow a north-south alignment. The Regeneration Plan shows how a new east- west route can connect the employment areas to the west with Stevenage Central via the station. This route will connect the Town Square to the station and beyond moving through a sequence of public spaces. The crossing of the railway line and the way that is achieved is one of the Plan's major challenges and will be the subject of further detailed investigation.

2.2.5 Creating the new east-west pedestrian link is not enough. New sites must be created. The removal of Lytton Way is the only realistic way of providing land parcels of sufficient scale in the centre of the town. Without sites of this scale regeneration will regress to piecemeal redevelopment and a major opportunity will be lost. Rail accessibility is vital to attracting new commercial development into the town centre.

2.2.6 The station will be at the heart of Stevenage Central. It is clear that much regeneration can take place around the station prior to its redevelopment. However, without a new station the whole plan will be diminished and Stevenage Central will not deliver maximum regeneration benefits. It is proposed to relocate the bus station close to the station. This requires reorganisation of circulation through the town. The objective is to connect rail, bus and taxi services in the most convenient way possible. The taxi drop off for a new station would be on the west side of the station.

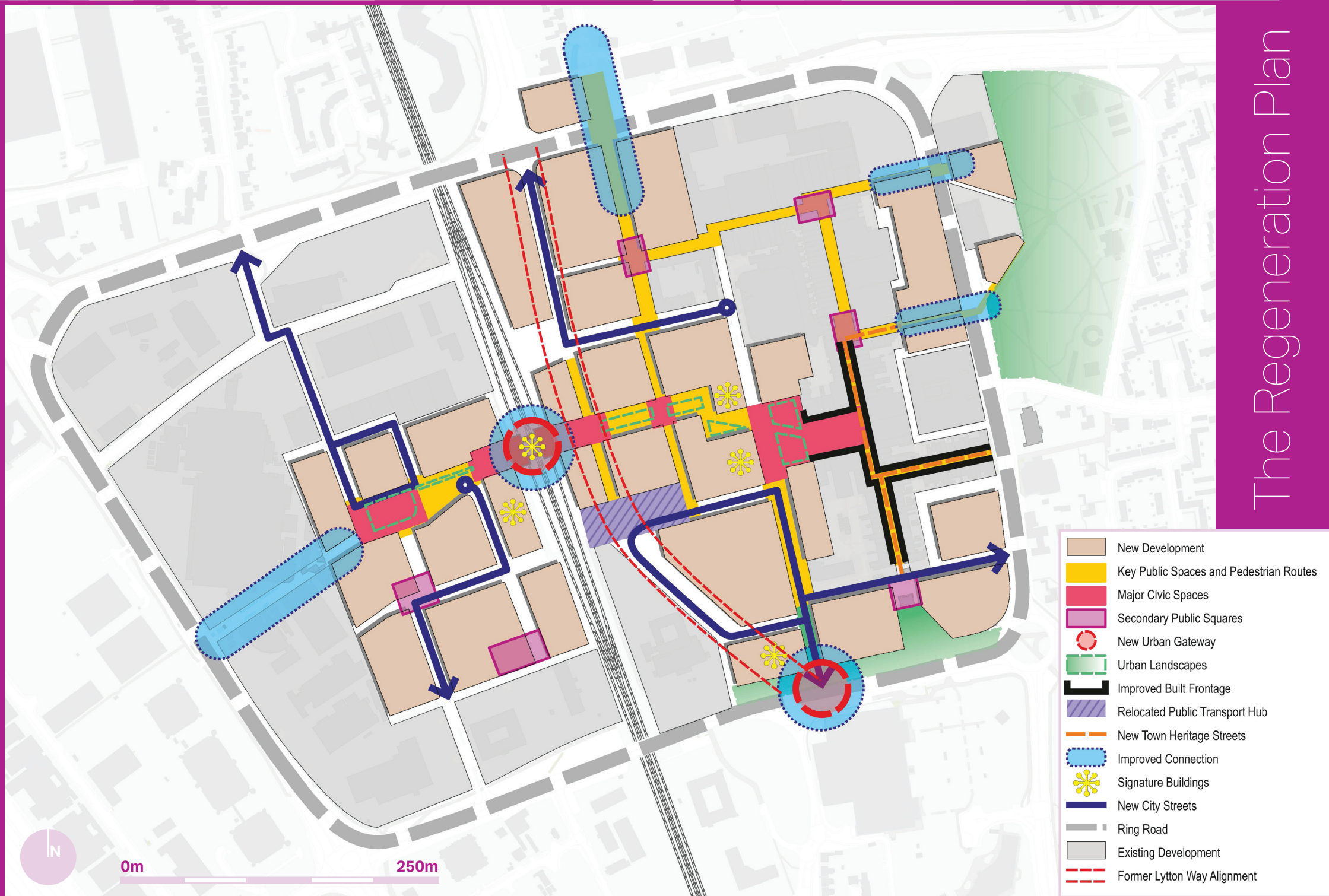
2.2.7 The Plan identifies Major Opportunity Areas (MOAs) which may contain a number of

development parcels. These MOAs are intended to be the focus of targeted marketing campaigns to attract developer interest. The first sites to be developed are those where there is already developer interest on the southern and eastern edges of the centre. These will be residentially led projects which importantly will bring a new resident population to the town centre that will in turn stimulate demand for retail, leisure and eating & drinking establishments. The Leisure Park can be redeveloped, largely independent of the other areas. The important consideration is to bring forward redevelopment proposals that comply with the design and land use ambitions of the Regeneration Plan.

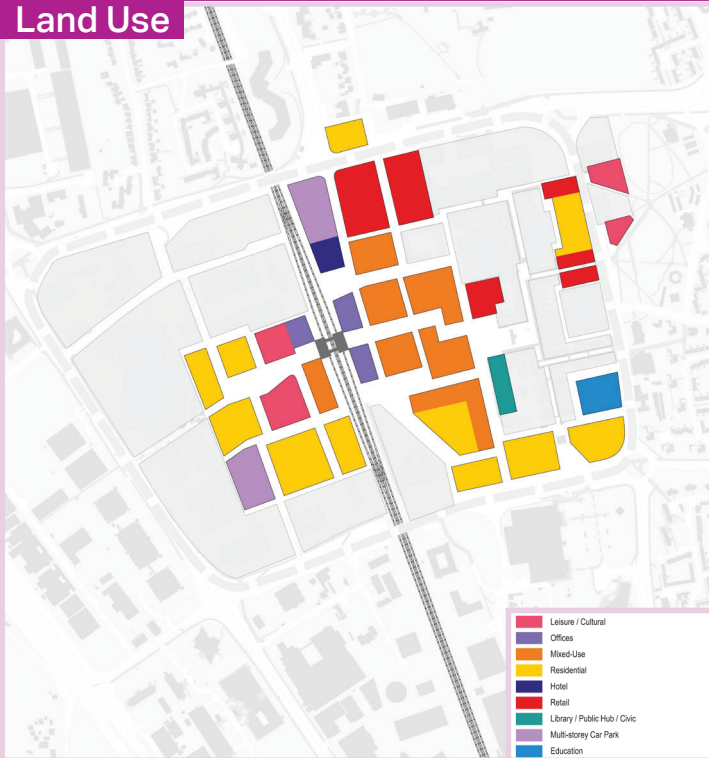
2.2.8 Public realm changes and improvements are a critical part of the Regeneration Plan. The creation of the new east-west route is integral to the development of the Station area. There are other significant improvements planned including a new connection to the Old Town and improved connections across the Ring Road to connect with Town Centre gardens. Redevelopment also provides an important opportunity to create a new street structure. At the moment too many routes merely provide views into the unattractive backs of retail units. The Regeneration Plan will encourage active frontages on key routes.

2.2.9 The Regeneration Plan explicitly encourages a shift in the centre of gravity of the centre. It seeks to take maximum advantage of the activity and investment that will result from the redevelopment of the Leisure Park. New investment in retail will be attracted to the new building stock. There will be a process of recycling where vacated premises are occupied by other retail uses. This is an inevitable consequence of the regeneration process. The new Civic Hub will focus public uses in the centre which will increase footfall and help to support retail uses.

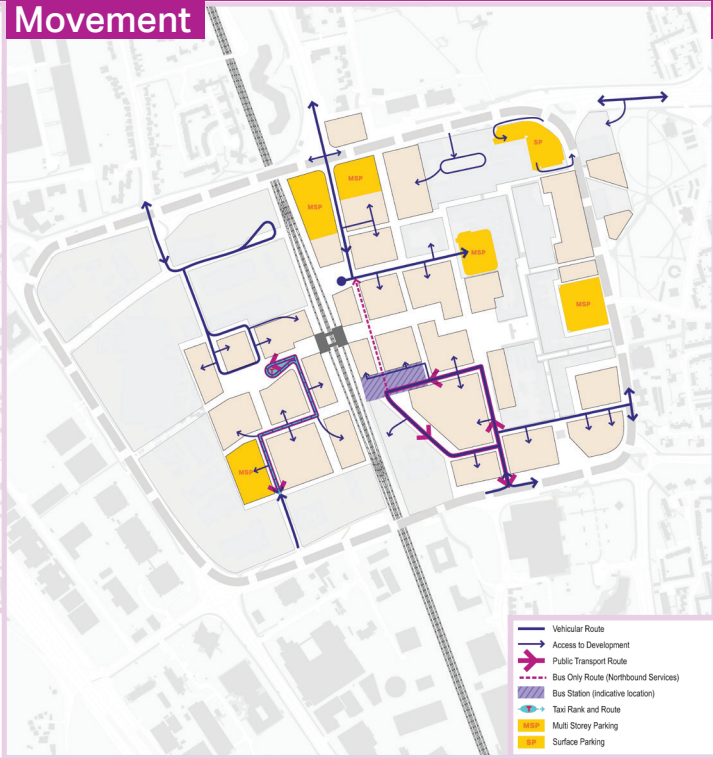
The Regeneration Plan



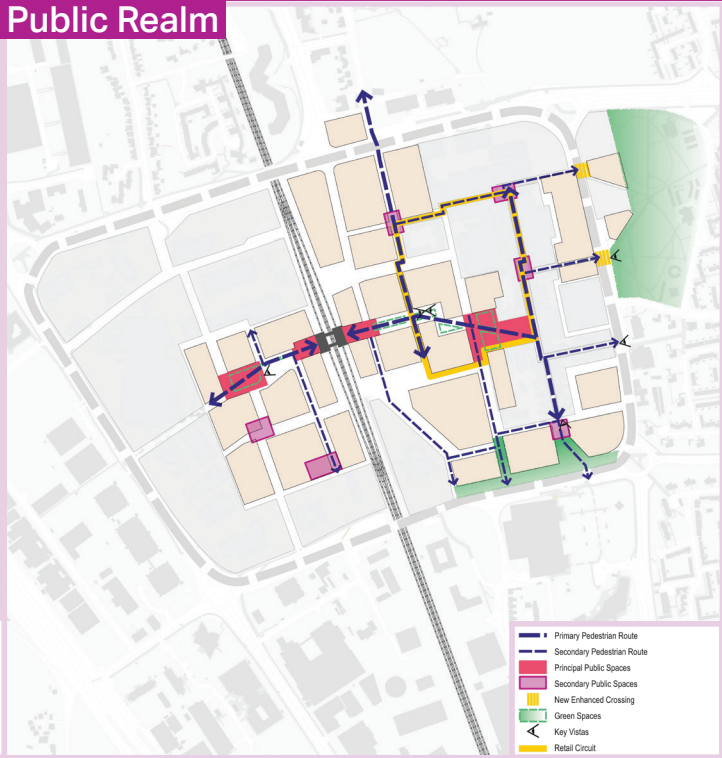
Land Use



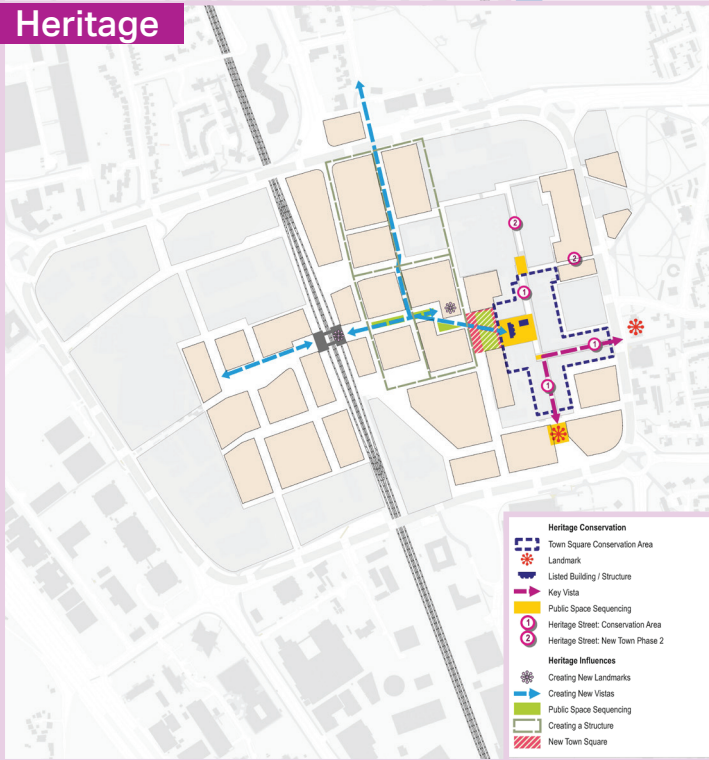
Movement



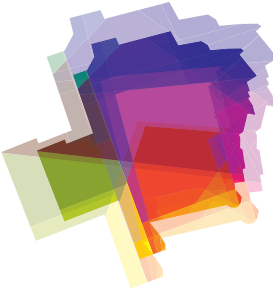
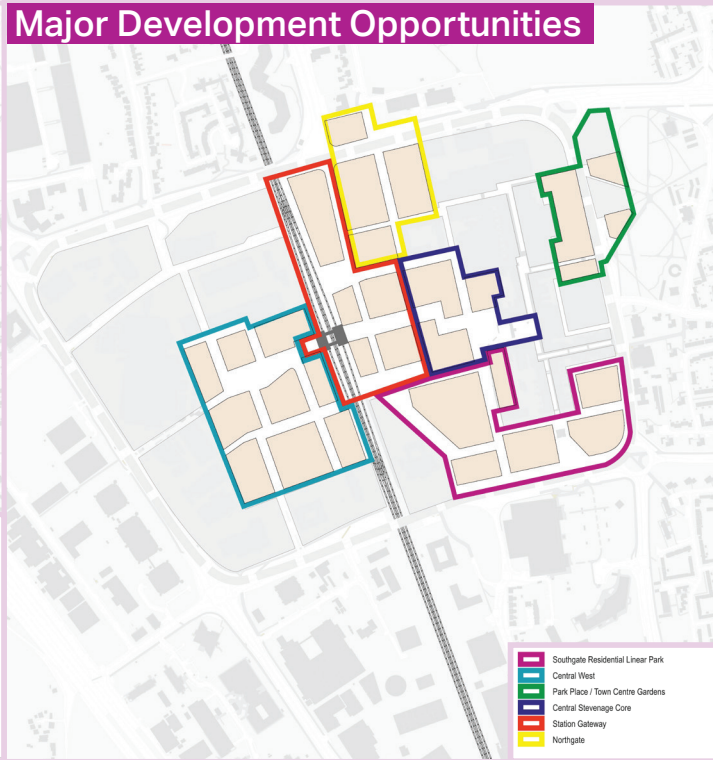
Public Realm



Heritage



Major Development Opportunities



STEVENAGE CENTRAL
TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK



2.3 Land Use

Land Use in Stevenage Central today

- 2.3.1** The predominant land use today is retail (Use Class A1) including the national multiples of Marks & Spencer's, Tesco Extra, Farmfoods, Iceland and Primark. Town Centre vacancies are low, but the retail offer within Stevenage has an over-representation of discount retailers and an offer which might be categorised as relatively down market.
- 2.3.2** The primary catchment area does not extend to Letchworth, and is largely limited to a tight area mainly east of the centre. There is a 39.6% market share (comparison) from the primary catchment area, compared to an average of 43.6%. Stevenage currently suffers from retail trade leakage to Luton, St. Albans and Milton Keynes. St. Albans and Milton Keynes are attracting the more affluent shoppers.
- 2.3.3** There are a small number of financial and professional uses within the town centre. Restaurants, cafes, and drinking establishments and take-aways are poorly represented.
- 2.3.4** Leisure uses in the town centre are very limited with A2, A3-5, sui generis, at or below national average, and not in prime areas. There are also insufficient A3-5 uses for the town centre to be an evening/night time destination. The leisure and night time economy is catered for elsewhere and primarily within the Old Town and the Leisure Park and linked trips with these locations are relatively rare.

The Regeneration Opportunity

- 2.3.5** There is now a huge opportunity for Stevenage to re-capture a greater proportion of its catchment area spending and to secure significant economic benefits. By improving the mix and quality of the offer, value can be captured from those that live, and, importantly, work in Stevenage. This relies on key interventions to change the land use mix and provide for the needs of a 21st Century urban centre.

Retail

- 2.3.6** There is a real risk to Stevenage arising from competition from higher order centres such as Milton Keynes and those that provide a different quality of offer such as Hitchin and St. Albans. Stevenage must provide the right opportunities to attract new retailers to sustain a town centre offer that functions well for the catchment and maintains a position in the retail hierarchy.



Example of high quality new retail, Leicester

Leisure

2.3.7 Changes in the structure of retailing indicate that the future for town centres cannot be built on shopping alone. Leisure uses have largely vacated the town centre for either the adjacent Leisure Park or the Old Town. The town centre has retained good levels of activity but has moved towards a lower value offer. Much of the 'richness' apparent in successful town and city centres has been lost. New sites and the redevelopment of the Leisure Park will bring new leisure uses to Stevenage Central bolstered by the planned growth in population.

Residential

2.3.8 The significant planned growth in the residential population in Stevenage Central will increase local spending power and demand for services and leisure opportunities in the town centre. There is the potential for a significant proportion of the housing growth in the Borough to be located in Stevenage Central.

2.3.9 There is an evident requirement for a mix of housing types and sizes, including small mainly 2 bedroom units, which the town centre is well placed to accommodate. Key bodies such as the House Builders Federation consider the potential for the development of flats in the town centre and near the station to be high.



Town centre leisure uses, Leicester



New urban residential development, Birmingham



New city centre office development, Cardiff

Offices

2.3.10 The existing office stock and its quality in Stevenage is reflected in relatively low commercial values and rents. There should be the opportunity to provide modern space that can complement larger scale footprints at Gunnels Wood and act as a catalyst for the wider improvement of Stevenage Central. The land around the Rail Station in particular has been identified as a location where new office development should be focused in order to maximise the chances of securing investment.

Civic Functions / Services

2.3.11 Stevenage has traditionally served its residents through the provision of central services within the town centre including health, library and Council offices. These are tired and no longer fit for purpose as core facilities. An increase in the town centre population means that there is a new imperative to ensure that the appropriate services are provided. To this end, the public sector partners have come together to provide a new public sector hub, with integrated services located centrally. Consideration is being given to the future of the Council's town centre offices and education provision.



New civic offices, Doncaster

Delivering Sites - Land Ownership

- 2.3.12** The significant public sector land ownership and, in particular, SBC's majority land control is a huge asset in facilitating a comprehensive regeneration programme. The Leisure Park provides an opportunity for new residential and office accommodation. The current landowners of the Leisure Park are currently engaging with the Council to bring forward the major redevelopment of their site.
- 2.3.13** There is a clear imperative to broaden the range and depth of land uses in Stevenage Central and the opportunity and potential is demonstrable. However, this opportunity can only be maximised if these land uses are properly located and the quality of development is such that it will enable a change in perception and, critically recapture expenditure.

Regeneration Statement - Land Use

- » Stevenage Central will secure a greater range of land uses that respond to the needs of its resident and working population and the changing role of town centres
- » New sites for development will be created and brought to the market
- » A flexible policy approach to land uses will be applied to Stevenage Central
- » The Public Sector will invest in a new Service Hub in Stevenage Central
- » In securing new land uses, the highest standard of quality will be applied to change the perception and offer of the town

Stevenage Central Land Use Plan

- 2.3.14** The Stevenage Central Land Use Plan provides a holistic view of potential new land uses. It responds specifically to the changing market environment and wider policy aspirations about the role that Stevenage Central can and should play at the heart of the Borough.
- 2.3.15** A greater mix of uses both across the centre and within the Major Opportunity Areas is essential. To this end the Land Use Plan identifies locations for targeted increases in leisure and cultural facilities, offices and residential development.
- 2.3.16** The Land Use Plan targets specific uses to locations where relevant but provides greater flexibility elsewhere. Particular locations where specific land uses are targeted are as follows:

A New Stevenage Central Community

- » Provision of significant new residential development to the southern edge of Stevenage Central adjacent to an enhanced linear parkland.
- » Securing new residential development to the west of the railway as part of the redevelopment of the Leisure Park
- » Effectively integrating new homes already being developed through the prior approvals into the urban centre.

Qualitative Retail Improvements

- » The current evidence for the town centre does not identify a quantitative need for new retail in Stevenage Central but the need for qualitative change is fundamental. Given the constraints of the existing retail core, further new retail space is proposed centrally as part of a mixed use location and through targeted enhancements to existing areas. These can provide the qualitative offer that new retailers will be seeking and includes the potential to expand the current Westgate Centre southwards.

Delivering Offices in Stevenage Central

- » The current office market in Stevenage is difficult, with low rents and resultant low demand. However, some 100,000 sqm of commercial floor space is allocated in the Borough over the Local Plan period.
- » The regeneration of Stevenage Central is a clear and stated priority, and should accommodate a significant proportion of this allocation.
- » New office space near the Station offers the best chance of success.

Re-thinking the Leisure Offer

- » Creating an enhanced leisure offer both in terms of mix and geographic spread across Stevenage Central
- » Re-working the Leisure Park to create more of a mixed use offer at an urban scale
- » Re-location of the current civic theatre and leisure 'box' to alternative central locations as part of a mixed use proposition
- » Bringing a broader mix of leisure and, in particular, evening economy uses into central locations between the Town Square and station, and into the Conservation Area in proximity to new homes.

Civic Stevenage Central

- » Concentrating current provision into a new public sector hub centrally located to include new style library and drop in health centre.
- » Re-working of the civic swimming pool to incorporate wider fitness and leisure facilities relocated from the current leisure 'box' fronting onto the town centre gardens.



Stevenage Central Land Use Plan

Stevenage Central Land Use Quanta

2.3.17 The table below sets out the optimum indicative land use quanta that could be achieved within Stevenage Central across the various land uses. These estimates are based on assumptions about development form and heights as set out in Section 2.7. In considering these numbers, the following considerations are key:

- » This Land Use Plan illustrates the long term development potential capacity for Stevenage Central. Both the rate and volume of take-up will be determined by market demand and conditions, and the success of the plan in creating a new market with enhanced rental values.
- » The land use mix is indicative and should be seen as flexible in its application. Certain locations have been specifically identified as appropriate for specific land uses, this should not preclude these uses coming forward in other appropriate locations, or the mix of uses being reviewed as the Regeneration Plan progresses.
- » The translation of the Regeneration Plan into policy should reflect the principles for land use as identified to ensure that the vision for Stevenage Central is achieved, but also allow for a flexible criteria based approach to be adopted.
- » The estimates of capacity reflect floorspace lost through redevelopment. The table below provides an estimate in the net increase in floorspace.

GROSS LAND USE BUDGET

(Use Class)	(A1, A3 & A4)	(B1 & A2)			(C1)	(D1, D2 & Sui-Generis)	(C3)	Site Area
Land Use	Shops, Restaurants w& Cafes	Business	Multi-Storey Car Park	Rail Station	Hotel	Leisure, Cultural & Civic uses	Housing ³	(ha)
m ²								
Major Development Area								
1. Southgate Park			13950			2475	56325	2.36
			(466 parking spaces)				(665 units)	
2. Central West (Leisure Park)		9900	58765		5470	21450	150425	8.00
			(1,961 parking spaces)				(1,383 units)	
3. Park Place/ Town Centre Gardens	3800		2400			5000	15400	0.85
			(96 parking spaces)				(182 units)	
4. Stevenage Central Core	6050	10150				8000	18900	1.63
			(0 parking spaces)				(223 units)	
5. Station Gateway	2800	39900	50600	2100	7200		15600	1.66
			(1,686 parking spaces)				(184 units)	
6. Northgate	20850	5625	13650				19500	2.91
			(455 parking spaces)				(398 units)	
Total	33500	65575	139365	2100	12670	36925	276150	17.41
			4,664 (parking spaces)				3,035 (units)	

³Residential units calculated by losing 15% of m² for circulation space etc. then divided by 72m² based on the Government's new space standards for a 2 bed, 4 person apartment (70m²) with 2m² built-in storage (except Central West where 105m² is used, applying Legal & General's assumptions)

Stevenage Central Land Use Interventions

- 2.3.18** The new land uses shown on the Regeneration Plan will largely be brought forward as Major Opportunity Areas (MOAs). The configuration and approach to MOAs, the approach to their development, sequencing and viability is set out in Part 2 of the Regeneration Plan and again in Part 3 – the Delivery Plan.
- 2.3.19** Fundamental to the delivery of the land uses as identified will be the development of appropriate policy through the Stevenage Local Plan building on the interim policy that is currently in place.

LAND USE

LU1. Stevenage Central Planning Policy

Issue / Rationale	The potential for new land uses in MOAs is significant. Policy needs to reflect this potential and the priority attached to Stevenage Central.
Site area	Stevenage Central
Existing use	Various
Ownership	Various
Intervention	Stevenage Central Planning Policy to reflect the ambitions of the Regeneration Plan.
Lead	SBC
Delivery	SBC to develop policy through the Local Plan, to be consulted upon in Summer 2015. The Regeneration Plan will form a core part of the evidence base.



2.4 Movement

Movement in Stevenage Central Today

- 2.4.1 Stevenage Central is dominated by the dual-carriageway Ring Road which is formed by Fairlands Way, St. Georges Way, Six Hills Way and Lytton Way to the North, East, South and West of the town centre respectively. Due to the proximity to the A1 (M), Stevenage offers excellent road connections at a regional level including Northampton (60mins), Peterborough (55mins) and Cambridge (45mins). The North of Stevenage can be accessed via the A1 (M) junction 8 and the South of the town via junction 7.
- 2.4.2 The town centre is vehicle led which is apparent through the presence of extensive surface level car parking. There is a clear yet unappealing distinction between movement and place functions with walking and cycling conditions varying widely throughout the town centre.
- 2.4.3 Pedestrian overbridges and underpasses have historically assisted with reducing the impact of existing severance caused by the Ring Road. However, connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists between the town centre and the surrounding areas is poor and likely to deter people from travelling on foot and bicycle.

- 2.4.4 The Rail Station is accessed by pedestrians via a ramp and overbridge through the Gordon Craig theatre from the East and Stevenage Leisure Park's car park from the West. There are two car parks to the North and South of the station.
- 2.4.5 There is anecdotal evidence that the Rail Station experiences peak period congestion on platforms due to inadequate width. A proposal for a fifth (terminating) platform for local services is known to be under development by Network Rail. This platform will be a cross-over and turn-back facility at Stevenage and is currently at option selection phase, due to be completed by December 2015.

The Regeneration Opportunity

- 2.4.6 There is now a real opportunity to consider a holistic approach to movement and rebalance vehicle dominance of the town centre while improving pedestrian connections across Stevenage Central. It must be recognised that any solution for Stevenage Central in movement terms will need to form part of a wider consideration for Stevenage in consultation with partners.

'Breaking' the Ring Road

- 2.4.7 It is a fundamental ambition of the Town Centre Framework to break the dominance of the current ring road. This will enable the broader concept of Stevenage Central to be achieved by creating new sites for development, enhancing the connections between key parts of Stevenage Central and enabling the provision of a radically improved rail station linked to new development opportunities. Breaking the constraints of the ring road will require significant interventions and this Plan proposes the re-configuration and ultimate removal of Lytton Way in its current form and a new at grade crossing of St Georges Way.

A Preponderance of Surface Level Car Parking

- 2.4.8 Car parking supply in and around the town centre is recognised to be in excess of 3,500 car parking spaces. SBC control approximately 2,500 of these. It is largely at grade and in key locations between the core of the town centre and the Rail Station. Making more effective use of this land through redevelopment and the re-provision of car parking is a key part of the Regeneration Plan.



Existing surface level car parking

Re-location of the Bus Station

- 2.4.9 There is a good level of bus provision to the town centre with over 30 individual bus services operating in the area throughout the day. Many of these bus services terminate at the bus station. It allows passengers convenient access to town centre facilities. However, there are indications of operational constraints and poor integration with other transport services. This location also affects the function of Town Square causing severance issues. There is now the opportunity to consider the re-location of the bus station as part of a new public transport hub.
- 2.4.10 Relocation of the bus station closer to the Rail Station offers the opportunity to provide improved bus/rail integration to support commuter services, release the current bus station site for more appropriate uses, and re-provide a bus station fit for 21st Century needs.



Stevenage bus station

Cycling / Walking

- 2.4.11 Segregated cycle tracks are available on the western end of the town centre with cycling provisions running North-South adjacent to the rail line, and East-West alongside Six Hills Way and Fairlands Way. These cycle tracks are part of the main cycle network in Stevenage. They are well used and need to be accommodated in the redevelopment of these areas.
- 2.4.12 Within Stevenage Central the pedestrian environments reflect the design of the original new Town with the main –pedestrianised streets being well designed and at a human scale. However, beyond these main streets, the town centre is characterised by surface level car parking and rear servicing. There are few wayfinding markers between the town centre and destinations immediately beyond within walking distance, such as the Old Town or North Herts College. By bringing forward new development, a new network of town streets can be created linked to the enhancement of the original new town pedestrianised areas.



Existing pedestrian / cyclist underpass

Stevenage Rail Station

2.4.13 The current Rail Station environment is poor and does not appropriately reflect the significance of the location. The station also acts as a barrier to movement given the changes in levels needed to cross Lytton Way and the rail lines. The Regeneration Plan promotes a shift in gravity towards the Rail Station that will place it at the heart of Stevenage Central as a vital gateway for the town. Redevelopment will be a major statement of change that will radically alter the image of the town.

Regeneration Statement - Movement

- » The severance effects of the Stevenage Ring Road will be radically reduced with a particular emphasis on the re-configuration and ultimately the removal of Lytton Way in its current form and enhanced crossing of St Georges Way
- » A new Rail Station will be delivered for Stevenage Central that will create a new gateway to the town and overcome severance to sit at the heart of the town.
- » Stevenage Bus Station will be re-located to provide extra capacity and better relate to the Rail Station.
- » Town streets will be created for cars, buses and pedestrians linked to new development opportunities in Stevenage Central.
- » Current surface level town centre car parks will be reviewed and brought forward for development.



Stevenage Railway Station

Stevenage Central Movement Plan

2.4.14 The Stevenage Central Movement Plan proposes a number of large scale changes to support the movement of people and goods, while strengthening the role of the traditional town centre as a place for human interaction. Sustainability and seamless movement are critical components of Stevenage Central. The Plan includes multiple modes of travel, based on a more modern approach to the transport hierarchy.

Stevenage Central Rail Station

2.4.15 The Movement Plan places significant emphasis on the Rail Station as a converging point for both local and regional journeys. The redevelopment of the Rail Station will enable the station to act as a suitable gateway fit for 21st Century, meeting the needs of the local population and visitors alike.

2.4.16 The Rail Station shown on our plan is expected to provide an enlarged rail concourse to accommodate increasing demand and improvements for rail passengers. Critically it should enhance East-West pedestrian connectivity.

2.4.17 The configuration and spatial arrangements of the Rail Station are critical design elements. Passenger and non-user movements are required to be modelled within and around the station environment to enhance current levels of service and minimise adverse interactions.

The Ring Road and Lytton Way

2.4.18 The Central Stevenage Movement Plan reroutes general traffic flows away from Lytton Way and utilises the wider dual-carriageway highway network around Stevenage Central. This approach will enable enhanced utilisation of the road network while allowing, through good design practice, the use and promotion of more sustainable modes of travel in and around the town centre.

2.4.19 Lytton Way will be reconfigured to facilitate improved public transport operations while enabling vehicular access to key car parks, servicing areas and other destinations. This route will ultimately be removed in its current form to create new development opportunities in proximity to the rail station and to enhance connectivity across Stevenage Central to the redeveloped Leisure Park and beyond into Gunnels Wood employment area. This will mean that Gunnels Wood road is expected to form a more prominent road route in taking traffic around the town centre. Likely changes also include the reconfiguration of Lytton Way/Fairlands Way roundabout and Lytton Way/Six Hills Way.

2.4.20 The Movement Plan also identifies the introduction of at-grade pedestrian/cycle crossings to better connect the town centre with Town Centre Gardens and the consolidated leisure facilities to the east of St. Georges Way.

2.4.21 There is limited information to validate existing traffic conditions. Whilst initial modelling has been undertaken in conjunction with Hertfordshire County Council, further more detailed analysis including transport modelling and traffic surveys are now required to better understand and validate traffic conditions and vehicle routing in Stevenage Central.

2.4.22 It is important to recognise that many of the tools used to appraise the impact of highway changes have traditionally been tested in relation to car-dominated visions. New modelling work should reflect changing movement priorities.

Car Parking and Servicing

2.4.23 There is limited car parking operational data available. However, existing car parks may be underutilised and there is scope for rationalising the use of land whilst providing adequate levels of car parking capacity to cater for predicted needs.

2.4.24 As part of the proposed car parking intervention, there is an aspiration to reuse some valuable land currently being used for surface car parking and retain adequate car parking on the edges of Stevenage Central. The development of a car parking strategy for Stevenage Central in line with wider aspirations and priority needs of the Council is a key first action in this regard.

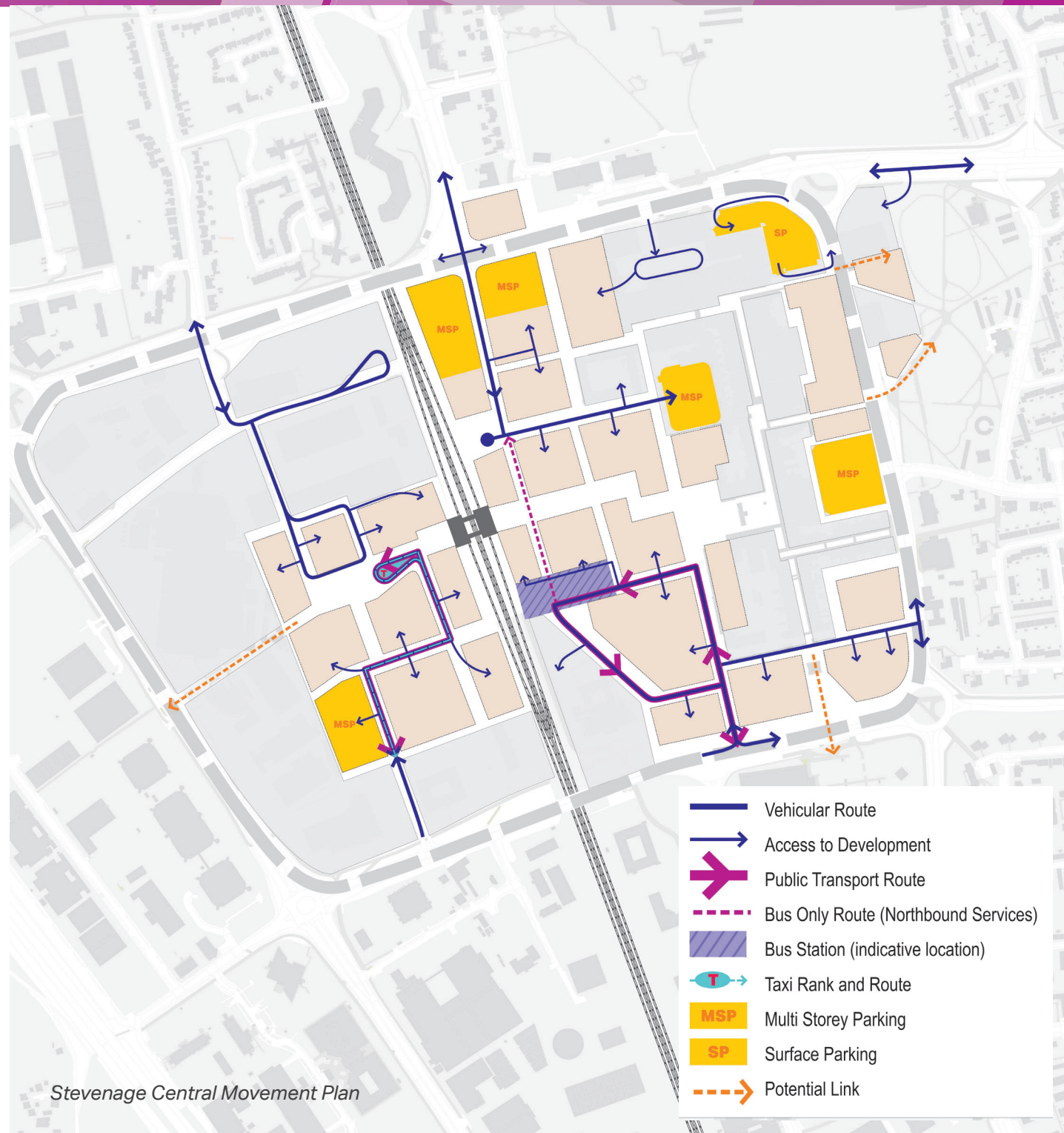
2.4.25 Servicing routes and areas are included as part of the proposed Framework.

Public Transport – Buses

- 2.4.26 Public transport is a central component of our Movement Plan. The plan seeks to relocate the bus station closer to the Rail Station while providing good-quality walking links to all parts of Stevenage Central. The bus station intervention will promote convenient passenger interchange between bus and train services and address operational constraints.
- 2.4.27 North-South access along a re-configured Lytton Way route will prevent general through traffic. However, limited bus movements may be allowed. Careful detailed design will be required to ensure pedestrian priority where pedestrian and bus routes potentially conflict.

Cycling and Walking

- 2.4.28 The plan seeks to connect the town centre with surrounding areas. Interventions will support more direct routes for walking and cycling by improving pedestrian and cycle movements to increase the attractiveness of cycling and walking in Stevenage Central. Strong North-South and East-West axis connections will be revived by bringing back to life the Old Town link through the historic London Road route and green links respectively. It is recognised that access to the town centre by car will still play an important component of the overall strategy, but a balance must be achieved between levels of car use and the opportunity for sustainable modes of travel.
- 2.4.29 The plan includes the introduction of pedestrian priority routes as well as clear and convenient cycle routes/accesses to cycle hubs within the town centre.



Stevenage Central Movement Plan

Stevenage Central Movement Interventions

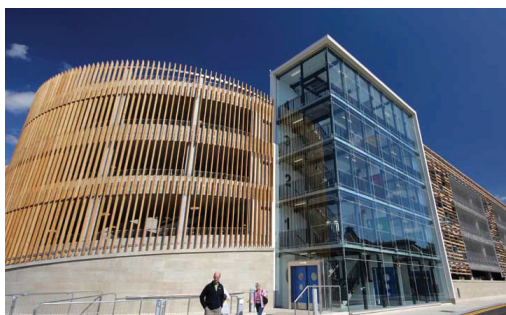
M1. Rail Station	
Issue / Rationale	<p>A regenerated Stevenage Rail Station needs to provide an inspiring and attractive gateway for a 21st Century Stevenage. As the key arrival point, the station concourse and immediate surroundings should set the tone and quality of the town, in terms of wayfinding, public realm, opportunity and scale.</p> <p>The rail station will be pivotal in providing East-West connectivity between Stevenage Central and Central West (Leisure Park).</p> <p>To create a modern double-sided station entry, with non-ticketed pass through, enhancing access into and through the station.</p>
Site area	N/A
Existing use	Stevenage Rail Station
Ownership	Network Rail and public sector authorities
Intervention	<p>Redevelopment of the existing rail station</p> <p>High quality, accessible and functional structure</p> <p>Double-sided structure enabling through station connectivity</p>
Assumptions	Network Rail will support the redevelopment of the Rail Station in line with the ongoing endeavour to provide a 5th (terminating) platform. Support from the Leisure Park developers is critical in providing an improved dual entering passenger and non-user access arrangement.
Lead	Network Rail & Govia Thameslink (GTR) in partnership with SBC and Leisure Park owners
Delivery	<p>Delivery risk:</p> <p>Lack of stakeholder buy-in / agreement</p> <p>Requirement for pedestrian capacity results in economic benefits</p>

M2. Bus Station, Operations & Movement	
Issue / Rationale	<p>The bus station is operationally constrained with no room for further expansion, pedestrian severance and poor visual amenity.</p> <p>The facility is poorly integrated with the Rail Station. Evidence suggests local bus services are well used.</p> <p>Opportunity to create a modern bus/rail interchange.</p>
Site area	N/A
Existing use	
Ownership	SBC
Intervention	<p>Relocation and redevelopment of a new bus station/ interchange, plus separate layover area</p> <p>New structure providing a functional arrangement for both bus operators and bus users</p> <p>Revised access and egress arrangements</p>
Assumptions	<p>Sufficient space to provide adequate capacity</p> <p>Efficient access and egress arrangements provided</p>
Lead	SBC in conjunction with local bus operators
Delivery	<p>Delivery risks:</p> <p>Agreement from local bus operators</p> <p>Agreement on funding requirements and delivery mechanism</p>



M3. Lytton Way & Town Centre Ring Road

Issue / Rationale	<p>The Ring Road creates a high degree of severance between the rail station, edge of town retail and the Old Town.</p> <p>The reconfiguration of parts of the Ring Road, particularly Lytton Way, is a long held aspiration. HCC considers that its removal would not cause significant or unresolvable issues on the highway network, subject to confirmation through modelling</p>
Site area	N/A
Existing use	Ring Road
Ownership	HCC
Intervention	<p>Reconfiguration and removal of Lytton Way as a thorough route for town centre general traffic</p> <p>Reconfiguration of junctions at Six Hills Way and Fairlands Way</p> <p>Reconfiguration of junctions to include at-grade crossings for pedestrians and cyclists to improve connectivity</p> <p>Signal controlled staggered junction at Six Hills Way</p> <p>Signal controlled junction at Fairlands Way</p>
Assumptions	Multi-modal traffic modelling to assess traffic impacts.
Lead	HCC in partnership with SBC
Delivery	<p>Delivery risks:</p> <p>Detailed traffic modelling concludes that congestion/ delay will increase as a result of highway reconfiguration. Engineering designs are unacceptable from a technical / safety perspective</p>



M4. Parking and Servicing

Issue / Rationale	<p>Existing parking arrangements are an inefficient use of land.</p> <p>Most parking is within the control of SBC (with the exception of Tesco & Network Rail car parks).</p> <p>Car parking facilities include three short stay facilities, seven long stay facilities and two car parks that service the rail station.</p> <p>Provision of adequate levels of retail and employment parking and long stay parking (i.e. rail & commuter) commensurate with current and anticipated need</p>
Site area	N/A
Existing use	Car parking
Ownership	SBC, Tesco and Network Rail
Intervention	<p>To improve the efficiency of car park layouts, particularly altering surface car parks to multi-storey car parks where appropriate</p> <p>To ensure “front-of-house” servicing is minimised and Stevenage Central develops a clear, deliverable and enforceable servicing management structure/strategy</p> <p>To provide effective parking and servicing information as part of a coherent strategy</p>
Assumptions	<p>Quantity of parking remains identical to existing levels within the eastern area of Stevenage Central.</p> <p>Further analysis is required to determine the split between long and short stay parking.</p> <p>Additional parking can be provided west of the rail station.</p>
Lead	Combination of Public and Private sector stakeholders
Delivery	<p>Delivery risks:</p> <p>Lack of agreement and ‘buy-in’, between public and private sector regarding future town centre parking proposals</p>

M5. Connections beyond Stevenage Central & Wayfinding

Issue / Rationale	Pedestrian and cycle penetration is poor.
	Large expanses of surface level parking at the back of buildings and service areas with very little visual interest result in poor natural surveillance and uninviting environments.
	Improving pedestrian links reflecting desire lines from surrounding areas
	Improving walkability and creating new points of interaction through the implementation of a well-defined wayfinding and digital strategy
Site area	N/A
Existing use	N/A
Ownership	N/A
Intervention	Removal of some grade-separated pedestrian and cycle access points into the town centre at the Ring Road
	Provision of Cycle-Hubs at key destinations
	Stevenage Central Wayfinding strategy
Assumptions	An at-grade pedestrian crossing facility can be accommodated without a negative impact on traffic flow or local air/noise conditions, traffic delays along St. Georges Way and the surrounding area.
	Mitigation measures will be introduced to reduce excessive delays along St. Georges Way.
Lead	HCC with SBC
Delivery	Delivery risks:
	Unacceptable levels of delays
	High costs of implementation
	Economic impact

M6. Travel Demand Management, including a 'Green Bus Service'

Issue / Rationale	Need to detail issue/rationale to differentiate M6 and M7 (Richard Crutchley comment – “both of these mention the introduction of the bus shuttle or bus link”
Site area	N/A
Existing use	N/A
Ownership	N/A
Intervention	Working with a network of key employers to adopt a mini version of the successful 'Get Ahead of the Games' approach used for travel planning during the London 2012 Olympic Games to effectively manage demand for road space.
	Encourage businesses to work in partnership with SBC to promote modal shift away from single occupancy car use.
	Implementing a package of sustainable transport needs, including a high-quality sustainable bus link that links key employment areas of Stevenage with the town centre.
Assumptions	Offer enhanced bus service information at businesses and via technological aids.
Lead	SBC to lead with support from specialist consultants
Delivery	Delivery risks:
	Interest between parties to form the partnership.
	Agreement of optimal bus route.
	Funding requirements and arrangements.
	Local bus operator to operate the service.



High quality new bus station, Slough

Town Centre Gardens

2.5 Public Realm

Public Realm in Stevenage Central today

- 2.5.1** The design principles of the New Town approach has resulted in an inward looking public realm experience within Stevenage. This is focussed on the Town Square and the main Phase 1 and Phase 2 New Town pedestrianised streets. The main green space in the centre is limited to the Town Centre Gardens beyond the Ring Road.
- 2.5.4** This largely inward facing approach to the New Town has also resulted in the town centre being physically, functionally and emotionally separated from other activities such as business and leisure as these have moved out beyond the Ring Road.
- 2.5.2** The main square and pedestrianised streets are of a human scale and provide a vital sense of place for Stevenage, but they are now tired and in need of rejuvenation.
- 2.5.5** Local landmarks such as The Church of St George and St Andrew, and The Towers aid the legibility of Stevenage Central. They reinforce connections to Stevenage's past through these important townscape features.
- 2.5.3** Beyond the core public streets, Stevenage Central is dominated by a myriad of surface level car parks, rear servicing, public transport routes and infrastructure. This results in a confusing experience, and a generally poor sense of arrival in the town which contributes significantly to negative perceptions.
- 2.5.6** Stevenage also exhibits a wealth of public art which is linked to the New Town heritage. This comprises the local listing of Peter Lyon's wall sculpture and Bajio's wall ceramic in addition to the Joyride sculpture.



Existing public realm at Stevenage bus station



The Joyride statue

The Regeneration Opportunity

- 2.5.7 Quality public realm in Stevenage Central is vital in meeting the ambitions of the vision to create an attractive environment that people want to visit, live and work in. The right early investment in streets and spaces is also essential to ensure that the current environment aligns with contemporary expectations.
- 2.5.8 Improvements will help transform the image of Stevenage Central and extend the visitor catchment to support the vitality and viability of the town, enabling it to compete with other desirable neighbourhoods such as the Old Town.
- 2.5.9 Building on the principles of the movement plan, public realm can be utilised to enhance connectivity, create value and provide orientation. This can be undertaken in harmony with the Development Plan to establish a clear hierarchy of streets and spaces. Investment in new public realm can be targeted to tie together activities and uses within Stevenage Central. This would facilitate wider connectivity to Gunnels Wood and the Old Town.
- 2.5.10 Well-planned and high quality public realm can be influential in increasing value and investment in town centres. Strengthening green infrastructure within the public realm can transform the quality of places, having a profound effect on the way a place performs, physically and economically, and the health of those who live and work there.

- 2.5.11 Evidence suggests that improvements to public spaces can increase commercial trading by up to 40 per cent and enhance residential property values by up to 7 per cent ². The Public Realm Plan is evidently of paramount importance in providing the appropriate setting for attracting investment, visitors, and supporting economic development.
- 2.5.12 There is now a real opportunity to both enhance the current streets and spaces within the Town Centre and balance this with the creation of new public realm that will breathe new life into Stevenage Central.
- 2.5.13 Investment in the existing core of Stevenage alongside the creation of new streets and spaces will both enhance the heritage and sense of place. At the same time it will generate excitement, quality and greater external connectivity and sense of arrival.

Regeneration Statement – Public Realm

- » A new network of connected streets and spaces will be created for Stevenage Central
- » Signage, street furniture and architectural lighting of the highest quality will be applied to change the perception of the town
- » Street and spaces will be connected by attractive routes to key destinations in Stevenage Central to encourage journeys to be made by foot or cycle
- » Key views will be opened up to aid legibility
- » Existing streets and spaces will be invested in to remove clutter and provide a modern, clear and well-maintained public realm

² CABI, 2009. From Grey to Green: How we shift funding and skills to green our cities, pp. 17

Stevenage Central Public Realm Plan

2.5.14 The Public Realm Plan provides a comprehensive strategy for public realm enhancements and the creation of new streets and spaces. This plan is linked to and complementary with the Stevenage Central MOAs.

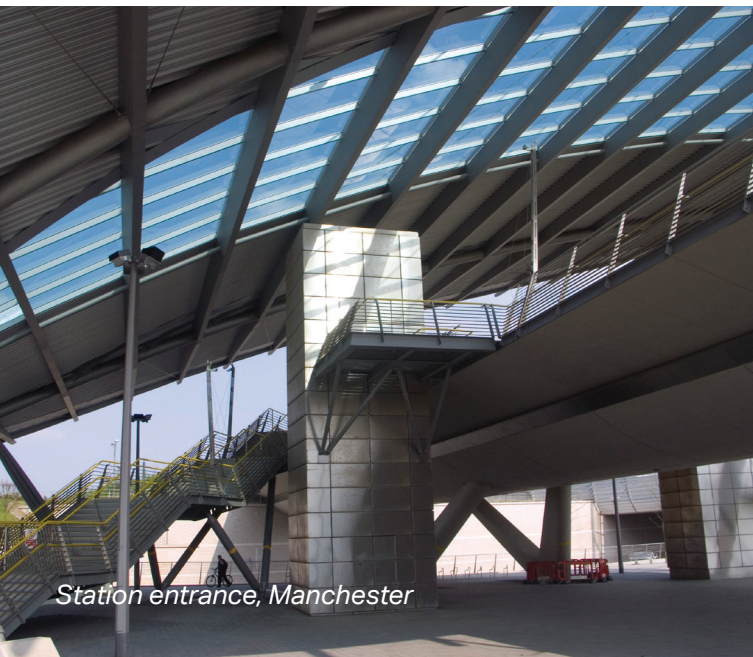
2.5.15 These coordinated improvements will change perceptions, raise quality and establish a more legible urban form through improved wayfinding and enhancing the experience of being in Stevenage Central. The following aspects are of particular importance:

A New Station Arrival Experience

- » Establish a clear sense of arrival into Stevenage from the Rail Station to significantly enhance perceptions of Stevenage Central, and make a statement about a quality urban centre where significant investment is taking place through the creation of two new station plazas.
- » Recognise the Station as one of the main gateways into Stevenage Central by providing a new iconic Rail Station building.

Creation of Town Streets and Squares

- » Develop a public space hierarchy and a network of attractive, pedestrian-friendly streets and squares across Stevenage Central reflecting the shift in gravity westwards.
- » Reinststate the Town Square as the focal point of life by encouraging community events and activities, reflecting its heritage importance. This requires relocation of the bus station and the creation of a new town square which will be the focus for development including the public sector hub.
- » Design public squares at an appropriate scale where people can have chance encounters and purposeful gatherings.



Station entrance, Manchester



New public square incorporating water and green space, Woolwich Square

Qualitative improvements to Pedestrian Routes

- » Public spaces will be well-connected by clearly defined pedestrian routes which will improve the overall appearance and quality of Stevenage Central.
- » Public routes will be designed to lead people through a sequence of spaces and towards existing and new vistas and landmarks such as the Rail Station building, new Theatre and the local landmarks of The Towers and The Church of St George and St Andrew.
- » Targeted improvements will be made to existing key pedestrian streets including Queensway, the route from Gunnels Wood to the Rail Station (through the Leisure Park) and the pedestrian link from the Old Town.
- » New and enhanced crossings will be provided across St Georges Way to improve the attractiveness and accessibility of routes which are currently unattractive and little used.



New urban street, Exeter

Providing functional green spaces

- » Environmental improvements to existing linear greenspace to the north of Six Hills Way to establish an attractive movement corridor and setting for residential development.
- » Better connect Town Centre Gardens with Stevenage Central through an enhanced crossing and the consolidation of public leisure uses.















Award winning City Park Bradford

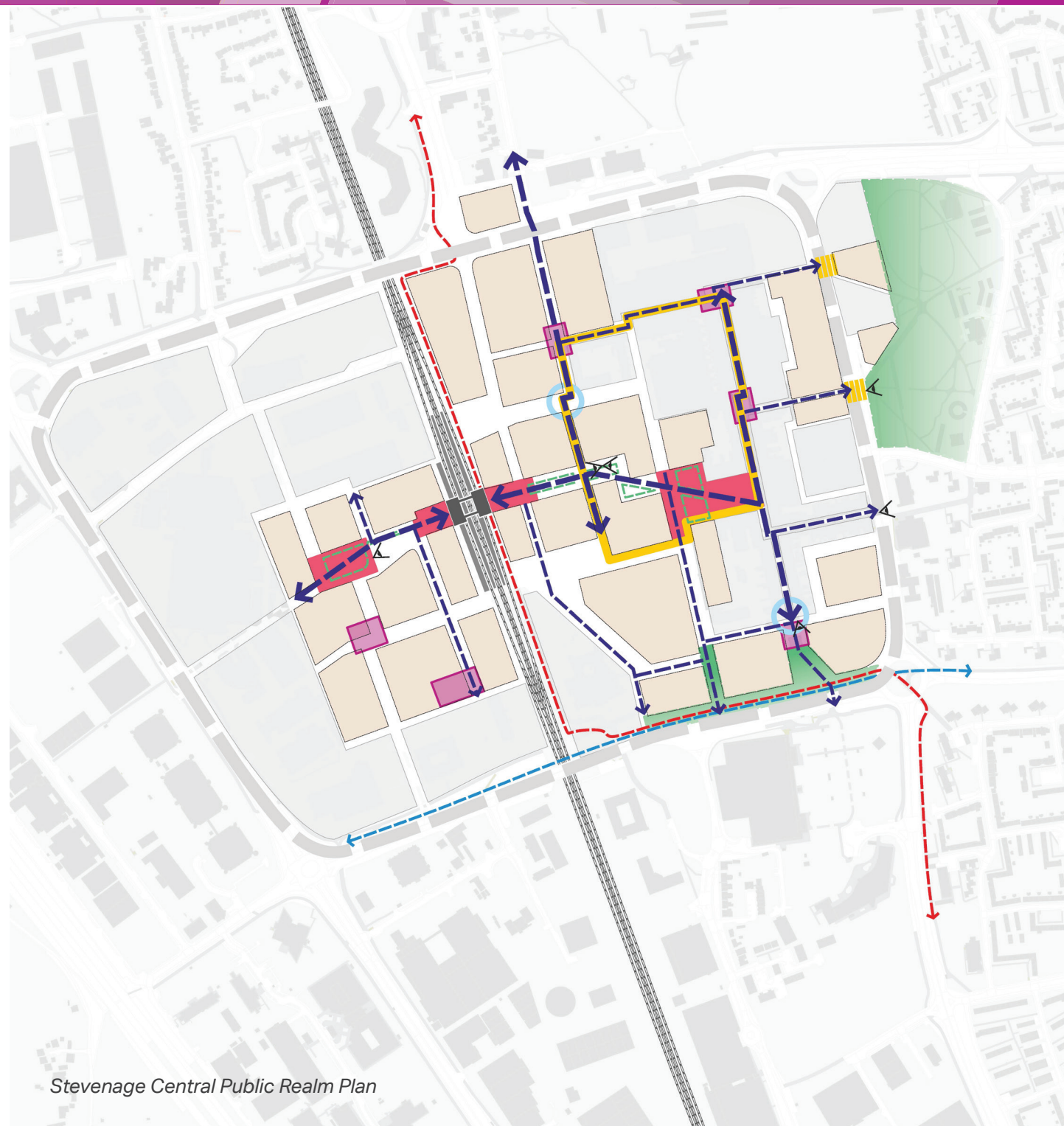
Establishing legibility in Stevenage Central

- » Establish a clear street structure which is easy to navigate.
- » A coordinated strategy for public realm enhancements contributing towards the collective distinctiveness of Stevenage Central.
- » An architectural lighting strategy will be employed to improve legibility and act as an attraction in Stevenage Central by highlighting important buildings.
- » Important views and vistas of local landmarks will be protected and enhanced to aid legibility. New vistas will be created via development opportunities.



Architectural lighting, London

-  Railway Station
-  Primary Pedestrian Route
-  Secondary Pedestrian Route
-  Principal Public Spaces
-  Secondary Public Spaces
-  New Enhanced Crossing
-  Green Spaces
-  Key Vistas
-  Retail Circuit
-  Pedestrian Priority
-  National Cycle Route
-  Cycleway System



Stevenage Central Public Realm Plan

Public Realm Interventions

PR1. Town Square	
Issue / Rationale	<p>The creation of a destination experience through public realm improvements.</p> <p>The Town Square is currently underused and lacking in a sense of purpose or function.</p> <p>The Town Square is located at the transition between the Conservation Area and areas of development opportunity.</p> <p>An expanded Town Square provides the opportunity to mark this significant transition.</p>
Site area	0.84 ha
Existing use	Town Square
Ownership	SBC
Intervention	To refurbish and expand the Town Square.
Lead	SBC, Stevenage First
Delivery	<p>Heritage Lottery funding to carry out mural restoration and the reintroduction of architectural lighting, repaving coordinated street furniture and tree re-instatement to unify the public space.</p> <p>New space to be created through contributions from the LEP and adjacent developments.</p>

PR2. Station Arrival Plazas	
Issue / Rationale	<p>The existing public realm experience at the Rail Station is underwhelming and routes into the Stevenage Central core are convoluted and unclear.</p> <p>High quality public realm providing a clear sense of arrival into Stevenage would significantly enhance the town's image.</p> <p>The Rail Station is one of the main gateways into Stevenage and its public realm needs to reflect its importance.</p> <p>The Rail Station will sit at the heart of Stevenage Central.</p>
Site area	0.43 ha
Existing use	Station arrival
Ownership	Network Rail and other public sector bodies
Intervention	Creation of two new high quality public squares as arrival gateways from the new Rail Station
Lead	SBC, Stevenage First
Delivery	<p>Development of a compelling business case with Network Rail for the Station Gateway</p> <p>Partnership with Network Rail, LEP and major developers to fund the Station Gateway</p>

PR3. Southgate Park	
Issue / Rationale	The existing landscape on the southern approach to Stevenage Central is poorly maintained and its full potential is not realised. The linear corridor contains the Great North Cycleway Route 12 as well as other informal pedestrian connections between Stevenage Central and the surrounding area. New and enhanced green space in this location will provide a valuable resource within Stevenage Central and is required to provide the setting for new high quality residential development. The reconfiguration of Llyton Way provides particular opportunities.
Site area	0.85 ha
Existing use	Green corridor containing the Great North Cycleway Route 12
Ownership	SBC/HCC/other public sector bodies
Intervention	Creation of a high quality green corridor for recreation purposes and a setting for residential development. Enhance the southern green corridor to encourage cycling and walking in Stevenage Central. Improve connectivity between employment at Gunnels Wood and Stevenage Central.
Lead	Adjacent Residential Developers
Delivery	Private-sector developers

PR4. Public Realm, Wayfinding and Architectural Lighting Strategy	
Issue / Rationale	The public realm experience is confusing and disjointed and doesn't always feel safe, secure and comfortable. A new public realm, wayfinding and lighting strategy is required to enhance existing streets and spaces and provide an exemplar for the creation of new spaces within the MOAs. Architectural lighting should be used to highlight important buildings and to provide interest.
Site area	N/A
Existing use	N/A
Ownership	SBC
Intervention	To develop a new strategy for and manage a coordinated programme of public realm enhancements. To enhance the legibility of Stevenage Central and the experience for people living, working and visiting Stevenage. To protect and enhance important vistas to local landmarks such as The Towers and The Church of St George and St Andrew to aid legibility.
Lead	SBC, Stevenage First
Delivery	LEP through Stevenage First



Queens Street circa 1950s

2.6 Heritage

Heritage in Stevenage Central today

- 2.6.1 Stevenage was the UK's first New Town in 1946. The Town Square (and its environs) was designated as a Conservation Area and contains the two Grade II listed structures of The Clock Tower and the Joyride statue.
- 2.6.2 Characterised by its rigid symmetry the New Town heritage has shaped a distinctive town centre and continues to influence the character and sense of place in Stevenage today.
- 2.6.3 The appearance of many of the buildings within and surrounding the Conservation Area is tired with poor maintenance and management.
- 2.6.4 There are three unique features associated with the New Town architecture in Stevenage which comprise the following:
 - » Canopies – which run along the building frontages to provide protection along the pedestrianised precincts. Canopies are flat topped and sit above the ground floor windows on plain metal poles with timber fascia;
 - » Decorative Panels – primary coloured glass or pre-cast panels which sit below windows on the upper floors of buildings, some of which have been replaced or painted over;
 - » Windows – the original Crittal windows are a key component of the character of the Town Square Conservation Area, although a number of the original windows have been replaced with modern uPVC.

The Regeneration Opportunity

- 2.6.5 The important heritage of Stevenage provides a real opportunity to create a unique sense of place through the targeted protection and enhancement of the Conservation Area, and the translation of the New Town principles into new development.
- 2.6.6 The Town Square should be recognised and reinforced as a key public asset. Given its central location between the Conservation Area and the MOAs this space could and should act as a bridge between the old and new as part of the creation of a new pattern of public streets and spaces.
- 2.6.7 In applying New Town principles to new development, care and flexibility must be adopted so as not to restrict Stevenage Central in being able to market itself and cater for modern-day retail and business needs.
- 2.6.8 The Conservation Area needs to be enhanced and carefully managed to ensure it is not seen as a negative. To be able to improve its current image in the first instance, the jaded appearance of buildings within the Conservation Area needs to be addressed. This will provide the platform on which to build, and to improve and adapt the existing offer in Stevenage Central.



Town Square 1973

Securing a Future for the existing town centre

- 2.6.9** The conservation area and Queensgate in particular, currently forms the focus for primary retail uses and activity in the town centre. Clearly, as new development comes forward through the MOA's, including new retail, this will change over time. This is an ongoing process in all successful urban centres and the recycling and re-inventing of parts of the existing town centre is key to success.
- 2.6.10** The Regeneration Plan specifically seeks to reinforce the existing town centre through an expanded and enhanced Town Square. This will remain a focal point for activity and the expansion of the Westgate Centre southward along with the public sector hub at the Plaza will generate activity. At the same time, it has to be recognised that many of the existing retail units in Stevenage are not attractive to national multiples as reflected in their exodus from the town centre. By focussing on the improvement of those buildings and the quality of the public realm, the potential for their re-use for independent retail and other leisure uses will be maximised. There are particular opportunities on Queensgate as the significant new residential community expands and residents and students are attracted back to Stevenage Central.

Improvements to buildings

- 2.6.11** Precedent cases can be looked upon where important heritage buildings have been restored to provide a striking backdrop to town and city centre regeneration projects.
- 2.6.12** Improvements to the buildings within the Conservation Area will be achieved in combination with public realm improvements set out as part of the Public Realm Plan (see Section 2.5).

Reinforcing a unique character

- 2.6.13** The iconic status of Stevenage's 1950's and 60's architecture and design is increasingly becoming recognised and appreciated. The promotion of the New Town architecture and design could establish Stevenage as a unique tourist destination to attract more people to the town centre.



Queensway South



Queensway

Enhancing important vistas

2.6.14 Vistas of local landmarks are an important aspect of Stevenage's character. The Phase One development of the New Town Centre is designed to manage views and culminates with the vistas of the Church of Saint Andrew and Saint George from Market Place and The Towers which can be seen from Queensway. These should be retained and enhanced as important features of the New Town.

2.6.15 Where placement of street furniture and CCTV cameras detract from these important views they should be moved elsewhere, or removed altogether.



View looking east of the Church of St. Andrew

Public art

2.6.16 Public art forms a significant part of Stevenage's heritage. These important features form an integral part of the public realm strategy which is discussed in more detail in Section 2.5.



Wall art Stevenage Town Centre

Regeneration Statement

- » Stevenage Central will secure heritage enhancements to reinforce the unique town centre environment provided by the New Town architecture and design
- » New development will reflect the layout and unique features of the New Town architecture and design to reinforce the sense of place
- » New views will be established through the disposition of buildings which will provide new landmark features echoing the linear pattern and sequencing of the original New Town

Stevenage Central Heritage Plan

2.6.17 The Heritage Plan is effectively two-fold. a) The provision of a strategy for conservation of existing assets; and b) A strategy for translating those heritage assets as influential features of new development. This will unify Stevenage Central in terms of its history, character and identity and ensure that the best of the past is retained and reflected in the approach to the new.

A. Conservation of Existing Assets - Heritage Streets

2.6.18 There are two very distinct 'heritage' streets which require different interventions, comprising:

1. Heritage Street 1: Conservation Area
2. Heritage Street 2: New Town Phase 2

2.6.19 Heritage Street 1 covers the Town Square Conservation Area and therefore requires an approach which conserves and enhances its unique features. This should comprise:

- » **Public realm enhancement** – a comprehensive public realm strategy which is consistent across the Conservation Area including repaving, new street furniture and tree re-instatement.
- » **Building repair** – addressing the current state of disrepair of a number of buildings through lack of maintenance to enhance the overall appearance of the area.

- » **Canopy preservation** – to preserve and enhance the existing canopies within the Conservation Area which are a unique characteristic of the New Town centre; a number of which are currently in a poor state of repair.
- » **Façade renovation** – to renovate the existing decorative panels and crittel windows as unique assets of the New Town heritage.

2.6.20 Heritage Street 2 covers Phase 2 of the New Town centre and exhibits some elements of New Town architecture and design but it is somewhat diluted, for example through the alteration of canopies along Queensway at the Westgate Shopping Centre. Interventions for these streets should comprise:

- » **Public realm enhancement** – A comprehensive public realm strategy which connects with new public realm within the Conservation Area, including coordinated repaving and new street furniture.
- » **Building reconfiguration for modern retail** – The buildings within these streets can more appropriately be reconfigured for modern retail needs.

B. Heritage as an Influence for New Development

2.6.21 The following elements reflect the key opportunities to ensure that new development within Stevenage Central reflect the New Town heritage.

The Town Square

- » To enhance the Town Square's existing assets through repair and renewal.
- » To radically enhance its function by expanding the space facilitated by the relocation of the bus station.
- » To bring forward new development facing onto Town Square which reflects the New Town design matched with the best of contemporary architecture .

Creating new landmarks and vistas













- » To reconfigure the layout of buildings to define key spaces and views of existing and new landmarks.
- » To establish new vistas which enhance the legibility and permeability of Stevenage Central.

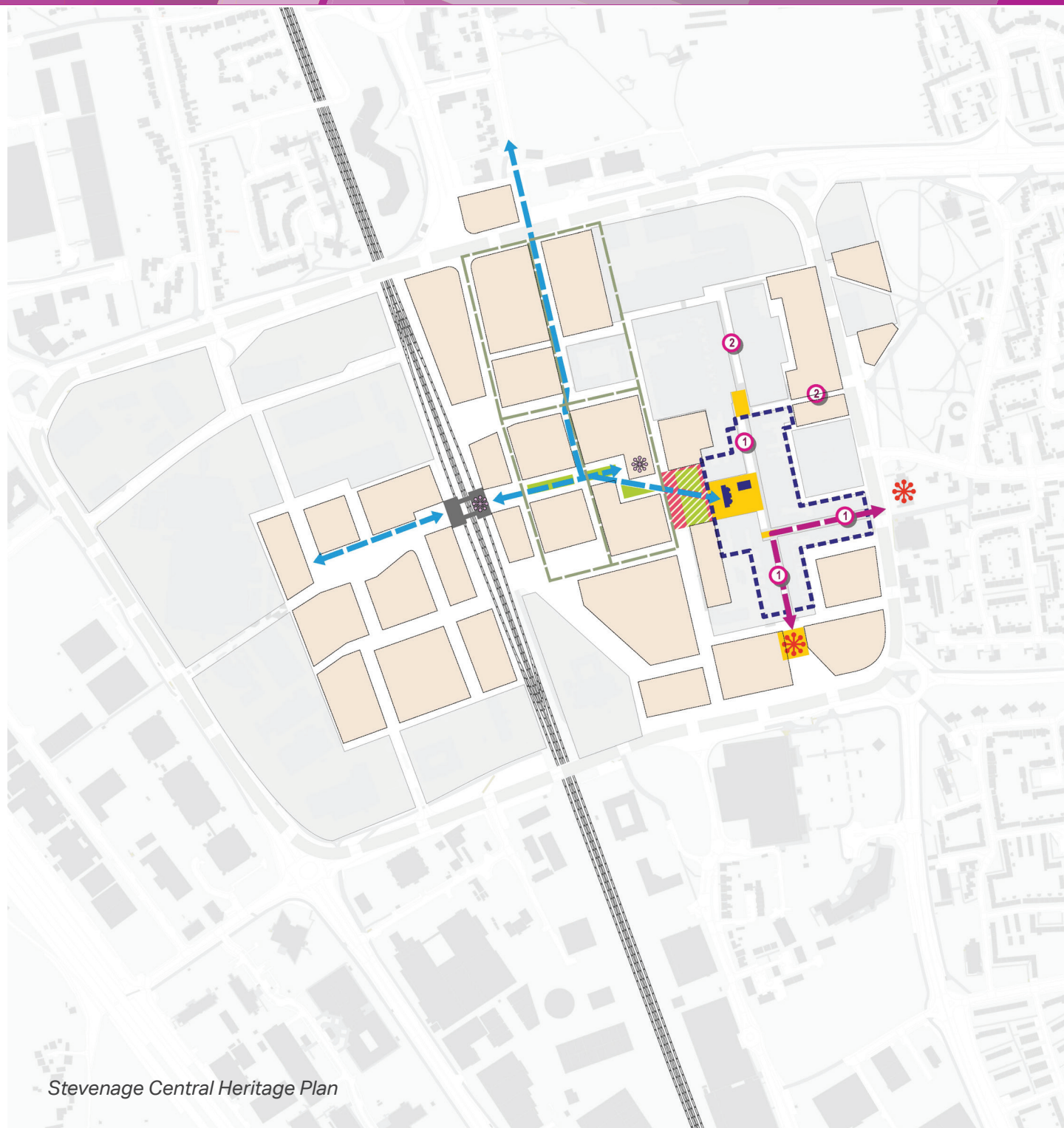
Public space sequencing

- » To echo the symmetry and layout of the original New Town by establishing a sequencing of public spaces which guide visitors through spaces and towards key destinations both old and new.

Re-creating the grid

- » To re-create the New Town grid through MOAs to establish clear routes between different areas.

- Heritage Conservation**
-  Town Square Conservation Area
 -  Landmark
 -  Listed Building / Structure
 -  Key Vista
 -  Public Space Sequencing
 -  Heritage Street: Conservation Area
 -  Heritage Street: New Town Phase 2
- Heritage Influences**
-  Creating New Landmarks
 -  Creating New Vistas
 -  Public Space Sequencing
 -  Creating a Structure
 -  New Town Square



Stevenage Central Heritage Plan

Heritage Interventions

H1. Enhancing Existing Built Heritage Features

Issue / Rationale	<p>The canopies form a major part of the design of the New Town Centre with the cross canopies linking buildings although their deteriorating condition is evident.</p> <p>The original decorative panels are a distinctive element due to their strong colour pattern and high visibility, however several of the glass and/or mosaic coloured panels have been painted over which detracts from their overall impact.</p> <p>The original windows are a key element of the New Town design, although a number have been replaced with uPVC windows which breaks up the uniform appearance of the buildings due to the thicker plastic frames.</p>
Site area	Conservation Area
Existing use	N/A
Ownership	Various private-sector ownerships
Intervention	A programme of repairs and restoration for canopies, decorative panels and windows within the Conservation Area.
Lead	Heritage Lottery funding/Stevenage First
Delivery	Phased programme of improvement to be delivered through public sector funding as available.

H2. Heritage Design Guide for New Development

Issue / Rationale	<p>New development should be influenced by important New Town features.</p> <p>In order to ensure that the right features are articulated some form of clear guidance is required to enable dialogue between SBC and developers.</p>
Site area	MOAs
Existing use	N/A
Ownership	Private-sector developers and public-sector bodies
Intervention	Preparation of a short targeted and user-friendly Heritage Design Guide for Stevenage.
	Care needs to be taken to ensure this Guide is presented positively and not be seen by the private sector as a potential blockage to investment.
Lead	SBC
Delivery	Early delivery through Heritage Lottery funding.



2.7 Stevenage Central – Major Opportunity Areas

2.7.1 The Regeneration Plan identifies six Major Opportunity Areas (MOAs) where development and investment will be encouraged. These areas have been named to provide them with profile and an identity in the market. They anticipate development proposals from the private sector, the public sector and in most instances, together in partnership. These opportunities can be promoted to developers and investors; the report format is designed to facilitate this process. Each one can form the basis of a development prospectus and package that can be put to the market.

2.7.2 The MOAs are:

- 1. Southgate Park
- 2. Central West
- 3. Park Place and Town Centre Gardens
- 4. Stevenage Central Core
- 5. Station Gateway
- 6. Northgate



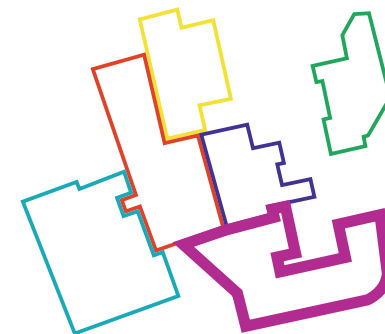
Major Opportunity Areas

- 2.7.3 These development opportunities provide a 'route map' for Central Stevenage, within which future investments should be focused. The MOAs are linked to the land use plan which is built upon an understanding of the viability context. This is discussed in more detail in The Delivery Plan (Part 3 of the Stevenage Central Framework).
- 2.7.4 The public sector has several roles in promoting the Regeneration Plan - major landowner; planning & highway authorities and funding source.
- 2.7.5 There is no prescribed development programme. However, an indicative sequence of development is put forward which is based on the current understanding of market interest, land availability and the complexity of practical development issues.

MOA 1: Southgate Park

2.7.6 The area is currently a mix of public sector uses housed in out-dated buildings, together with a residential tower that will remain. The majority of these uses are programmed to move into the Civic Hub, leaving most of the site vacant. A long distance cycleway passes through the site, which can be enhanced and incorporated within the associated linear park.

2.7.7 Southgate Park can come forward as one of the first MOAs. It will be primarily a residential area with ready access to both town centre shopping and the ASDA supermarket. There is space within the MOA to accommodate an urban primary school if that requirement is confirmed and defined by the education authority. The new Urban School is proposed for the current surface-level car park to the north of Southgate. This is in close proximity to the new residential quarter being created and is in walking distance of Town Centre Gardens.



2.7.8 A private sector redevelopment of the Matalan site and adjacent car park is already the subject of a planning application. At this stage the level of commitment to the implementation of this scheme remains to be determined. Nevertheless, it demonstrates clear development interest in this MOA and both establishes and tests potential development parameters for the rest of the area.

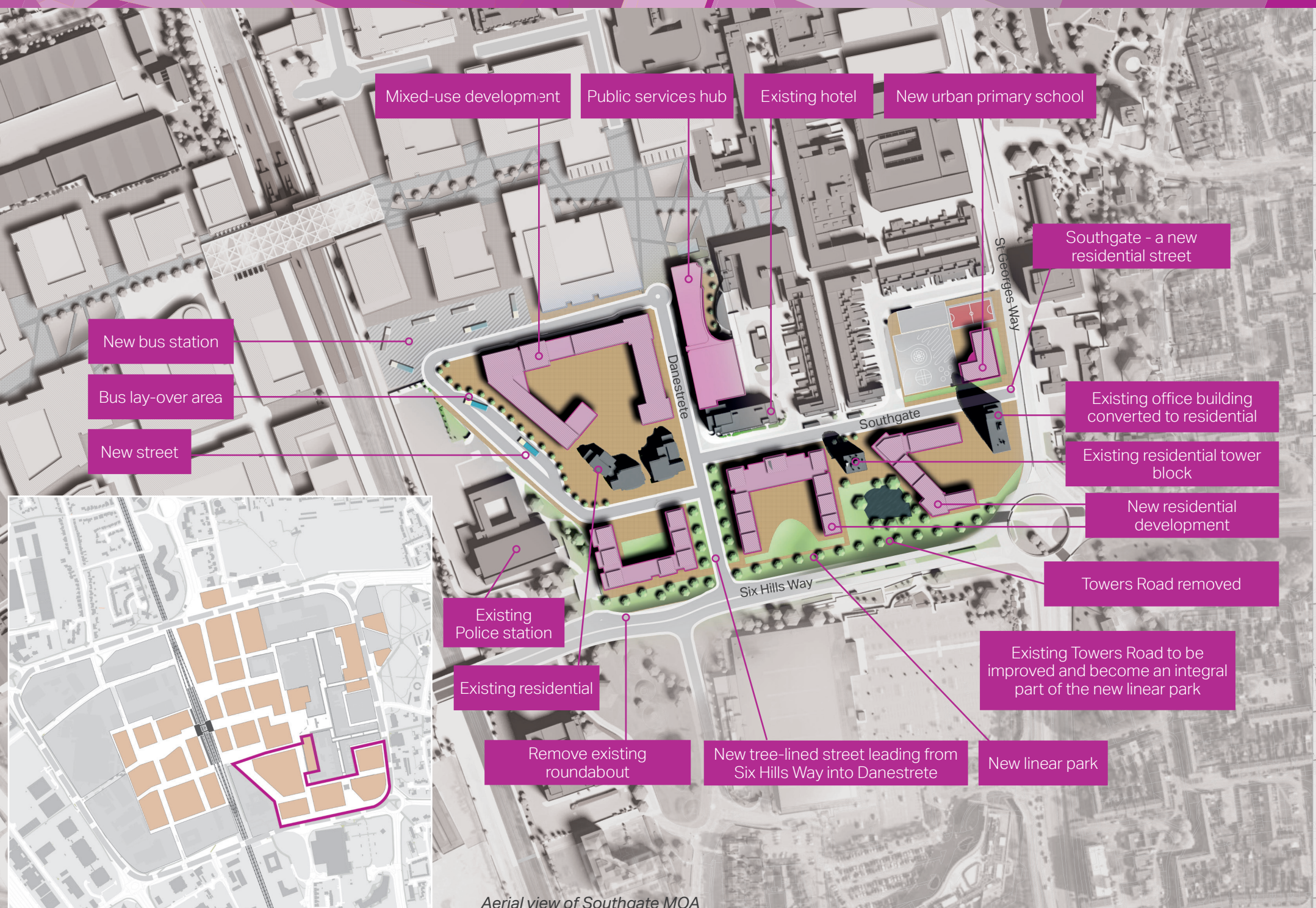
2.7.9 The development proposal for the Matalan site is as follows:

- » 526 residential units (one & two bed)
- » 1700 m² of ground floor A1, A2, A3 retail and leisure space
- » 109 car parking spaces
- » landscaping
- » service yard

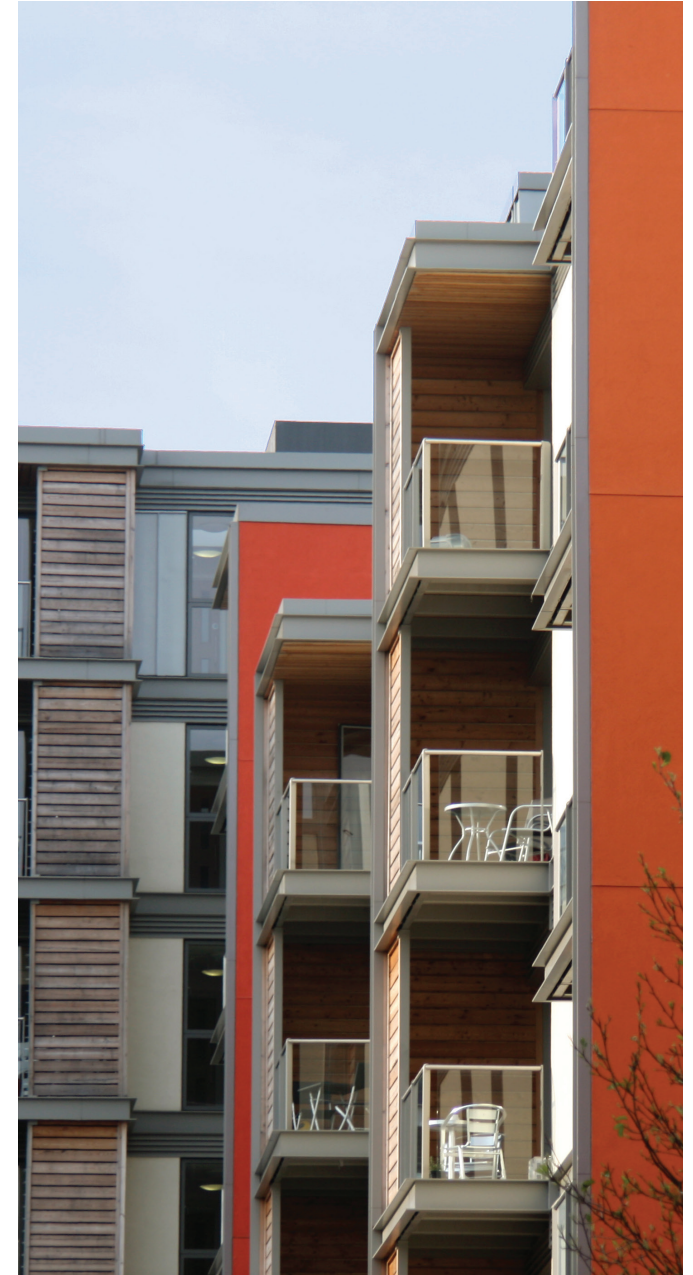
2.7.10 The building form steps up from 7 to 13 storeys at the important corners. This sets a clear height parameter and respects the setting of the existing Tower to be retained. Southgate provides the opportunity to create a major new residential area on the southern gateway of Stevenage Central and new frontage to Six Hills Way where it can set a clear design standard about the scale and significance of the impending changes.

2.7.11 Through the reconfiguration of Lytton Way with its junction at Six Hills Way, a new development site can be created through the removal of the existing roundabout.

Site area	7.2 ha
Existing use	HCC (former police station), The Towers, Southgate Health Centre (NHS) and NHS Southgate west, Library and Southgate car park
Ownership	HCC, SBC, NHS
Proposed uses	Residential apartments Linear park Urban Primary School Civic Hub (including health, library, SBC front office)
Development Capacity	Housing 56,325 m ² 665 units Civic/Leisure/Cultural 2,475 m ² Car parking 13,950 m ² 466 cps
Parameters	Building heights to range between 7 storeys and 13 storeys respecting existing buildings to be retained and creating new landmarks. New residential apartments should front onto an extended and improved linear park providing a new attractive environment to Six Hills Way. Residential dwellings would benefit from a southerly aspect and a new parkland setting. This southern linear corridor will be transformed by enhanced green space with overlooking provided by adjacent dwellings. Pedestrian linkages to be improved southwards towards North Hertfordshire College. Reopening of Southgate as an urban residential street and the removal of Tower Road. The creation of a new public space at the southern end of Eastgate at its junction with Southgate. Re-use of the Plaza site for the Civic Hub fronting onto enhanced and expanded Town Square.
Delivery issues, lead and process	Public sector land assembly and site marketing. Private-sector residential developers.



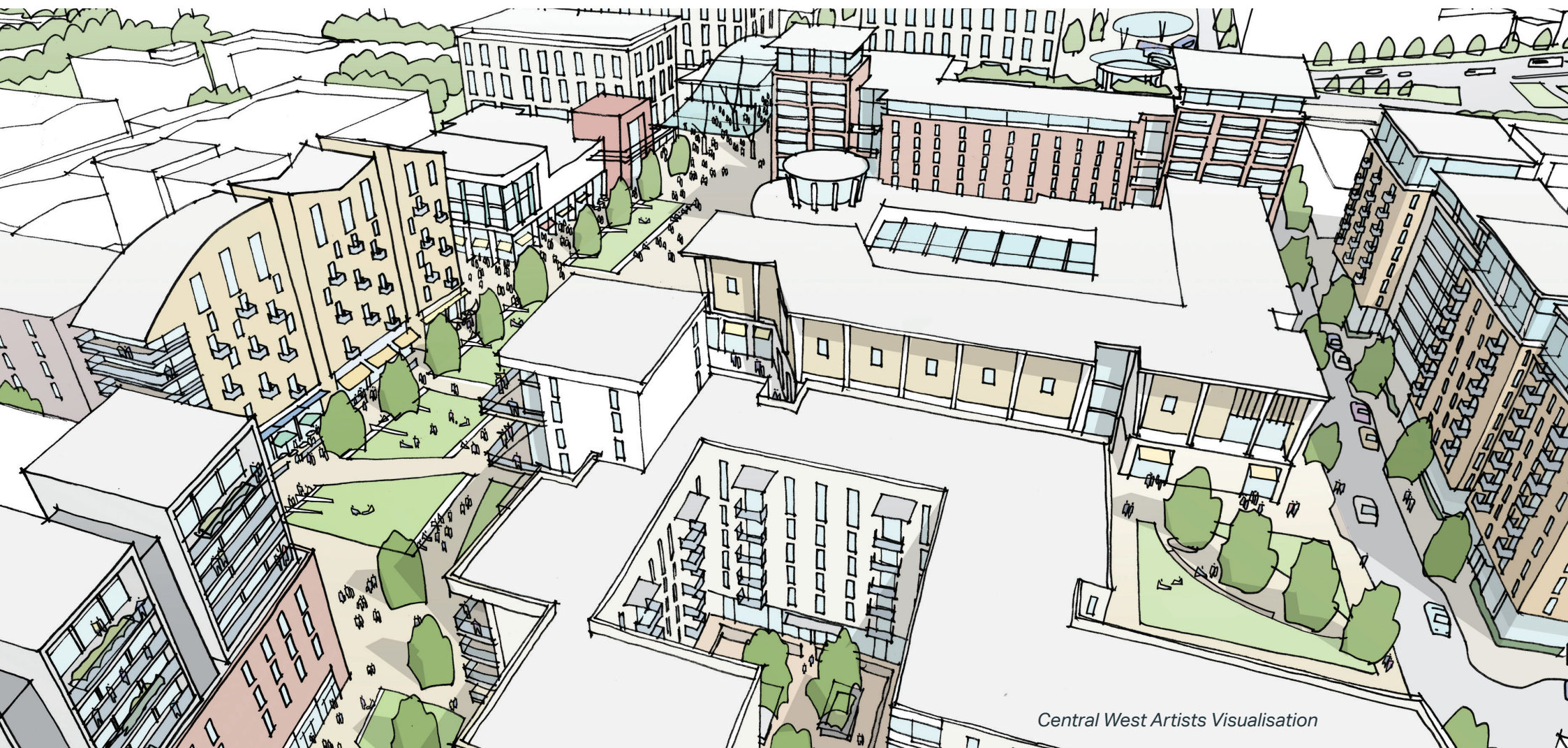
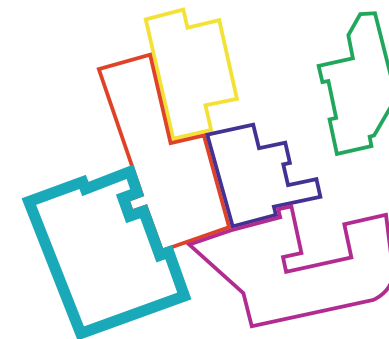
Aerial view of Southgate MOA

Southgate Park Precedents

MOA 2: Central West

2.7.12 Central West MOA is in private ownership. Discussions with these owners indicate that they are actively considering and reviewing their redevelopment proposals for the area. This is encouraging because it demonstrates both locally and nationally that a major financial institution has the confidence to invest in the town. The future of this area is of immense significance because of its scale, relationship to the station and the linkages that can be created and

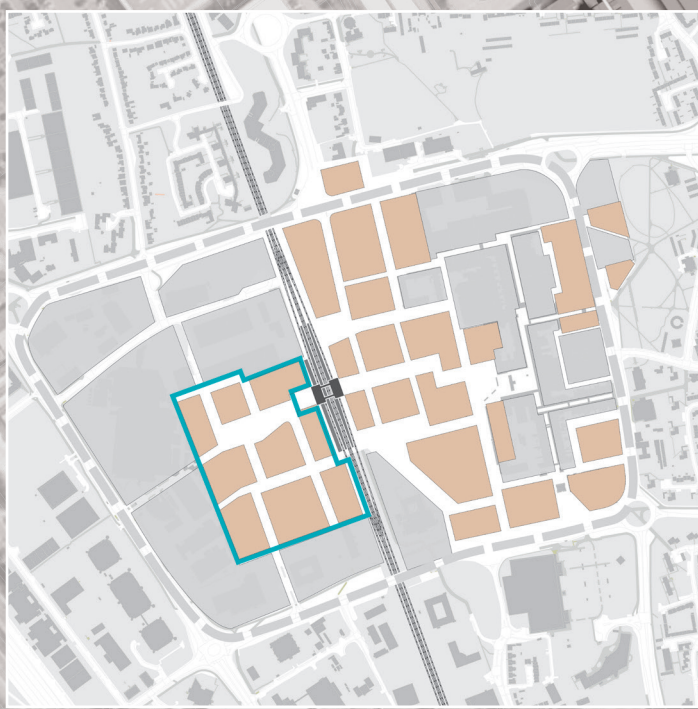
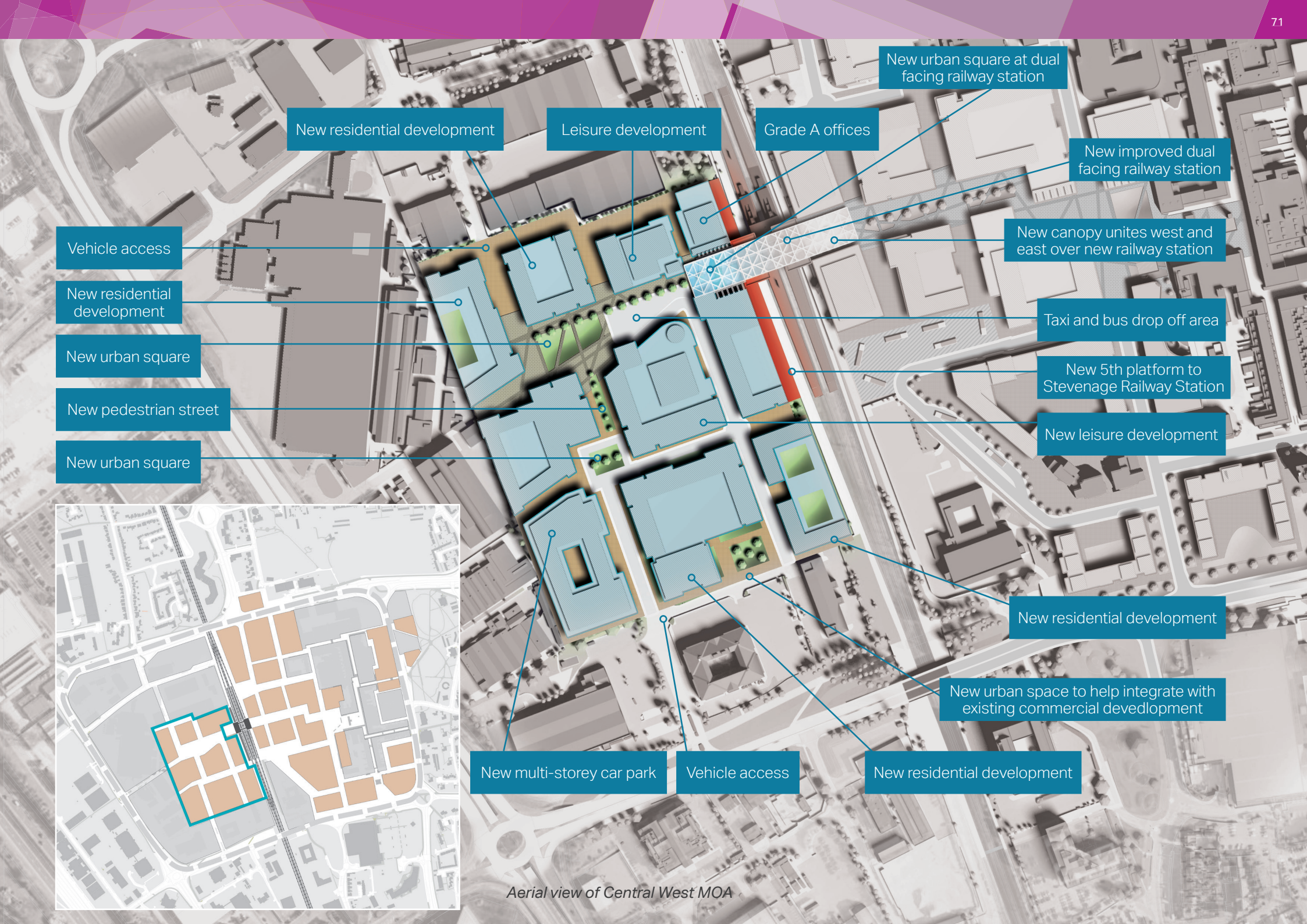
enhanced to the employment areas to the west and the existing town centre to the east. Development footprints can be more flexible in this area because, in general, there are fewer constraints to be addressed. The final mix of uses is still under consideration and will be the subject of further discussion with SBC as the proposals move to planning application stage.



Central West Artists Visualisation

- 2.7.13** This area is currently characterised by surface-level car parking and large-scale leisure units. Through its redevelopment the shared ambition is to create a more urban form and broader mix of uses which compliments and contributes to the wider ambitions of Stevenage Central.
- 2.7.14** Any office component in the scheme should be located as close to the station as possible. This will contribute to the critical mass of development that is sought around the station in the most sustainable location.

Site area	8.1 ha
Existing use	Assembly and Leisure (Class D2), Restaurants and cafes (Class A3), and Financial and professional (Class A2) and surface-level car parking
Ownership	Private ownership
Proposed uses	Leisure
	Restaurants and cafes
	Residential
	Offices
	Conference Centre
	Hotel
	Multi-storey car park
	Taxi rank
	New public space
Development Capacity	Offices 9,900 m ²
	Hotel 5,470 m ² 1,383 units
	Housing 150,425 m ²
	Civic/leisure/cultural 21,450 m ²
	Car parking 58,765 1,961 cps
Parameters and massing (quantitative/ scale)	Building heights will range from 2 storeys to 10 storeys.
	Removal of surface-level car parking and the creation of new streets and spaces.
	Continuation of the east-west pedestrian axis from Town Square through a new Rail Station to connect with a new public space.
	Commercial and leisure uses/activity to be focused on new Rail Station and public space with residential blocks surrounding to the west and south.
	Provision of a new dedicated public transport service which will serve the wider Gunnels Wood employment area and Roaring Meg.
	Accommodation of the main Stevenage Central taxi rank in proximity to the Station Plaza.
	Creation of greater permeability on the western edge to provide potential for future linkages to the wider Gunnels Wood employment area.
Delivery issues, lead and process	Vehicular access north to south will be prohibited.
	To be delivered in partnership with private-sector landowners.
	Interface with the delivery of Station Gateway MOA and therefore Network Rail will be key to success.



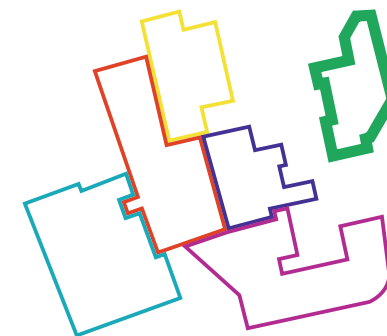
Aerial view of Central West MOA

Central West Precedents

MOA 3: Park Place and Town Centre Gardens

2.7.15 Park Place has been under consideration as a development opportunity for some time. This site has the potential to deliver a mixed use scheme on the eastern side of the town centre, providing a balance of retail and residential development.

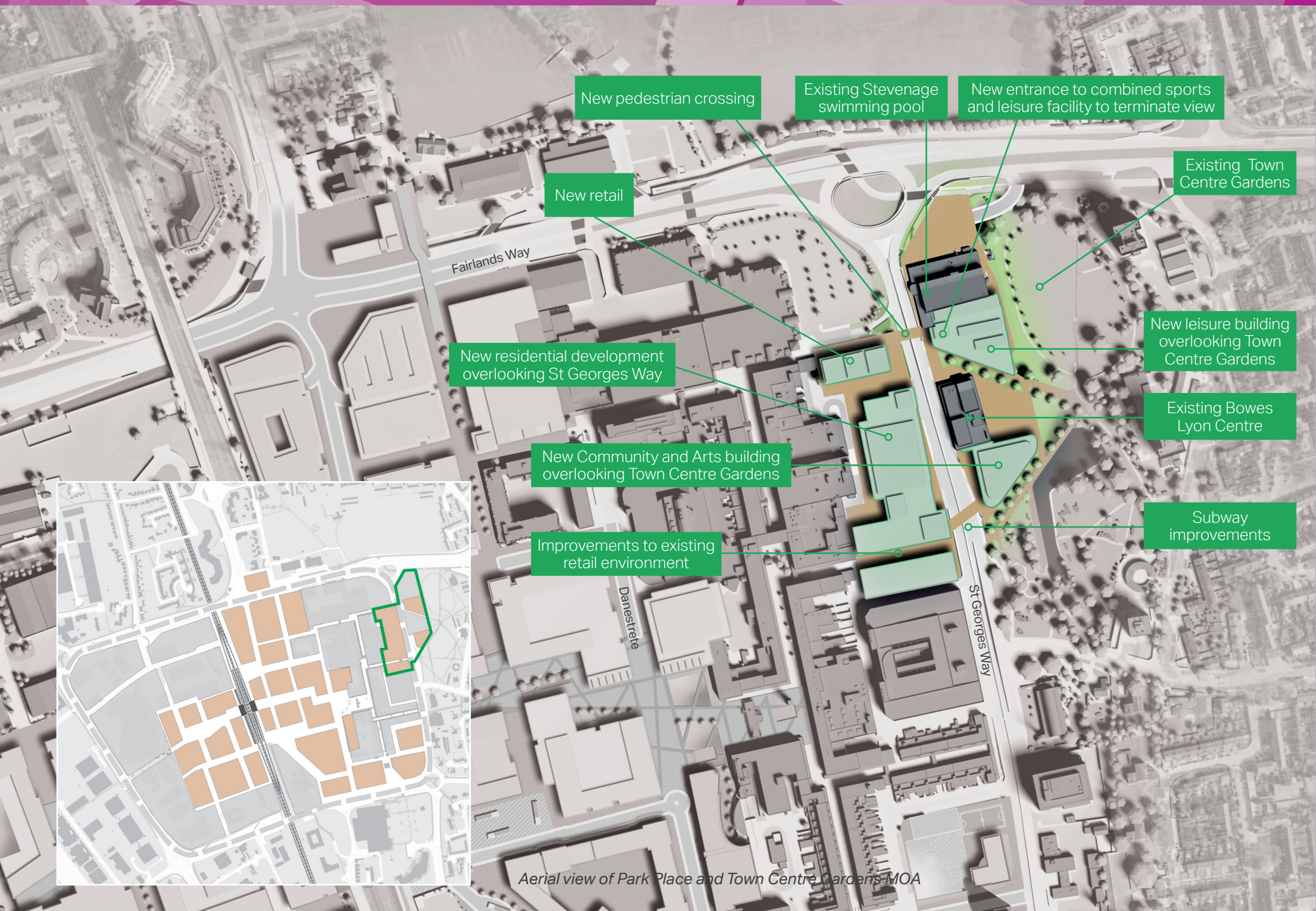
2.7.16 On the east side of St Georges Way, there is a major opportunity to reinvigorate the existing leisure centre, swimming pool and youth facilities. This site will accommodate the relocated sports, leisure and art facilities from the demolished Gordon Craig Theatre/leisure box (See MOA 5). This should include a hall of sufficient scale to be able to accommodate events following the demolition of the Leisure Box.



Park Place and Town Centre Gardens Artists Visualisation

- 2.7.17** The consolidation of arts, leisure and sports facilities in this location would provide a major attractor on the eastern edge of the town. Critically, delivering these facilities in this location will act as a counter balance as the focus of the town centre moves westwards towards the Rail Station. An increase in pedestrian flows will help to support the retail offer in this part of the town centre.
- 2.7.18** Through the careful design and siting of development a new frontage to Town Centre Gardens can be created enhancing the integration of this key New Town asset into Stevenage Central.
- 2.7.19** As part of the redevelopment of this area it will be essential to change the character of St Georges Way through investment in environmental improvements and in particular landscape to create more of a civic street and reflecting the ambition for connectivity between Stevenage Central, the Town Centre Gardens and the wider residential neighbourhoods.
- 2.7.20** The existence of significant public parking, both surface-level and multi-storey, in this part of Stevenage Central can be effectively utilised by the leisure uses.

Site area	3.5 ha
Existing use	Shops (Class A1), leisure (use Class D2) and youth facilities (use Class D1)
Ownership	Private ownerships and SBC
Proposed uses	Residential
	Retail
	Sport and Leisure
	Arts Centre
	Youth and community facilities
	Café
Development Capacity	Civic/leisure/cultural 5,000 m ²
	Retail 3,800 m ²
	Housing 15,400 m ² 182 units
	Car parking 2,400 m ² 96 cps
Parameters	Building heights will range from 2 storeys on the site adjoining Town Centre Gardens to 6 storeys on Park Place.
	Rejuvenation of Marshgate through enhanced retail and public realm improvements including radically upgraded underpass to Town Centre Gardens.
	New retail frontage to The Forum with new pedestrian at-grade pedestrian crossing over St George's Way to connect with new leisure offer and Town Centre Gardens.
	Provide an improved active frontage to redefine the eastern edge of the town at the location of the current Marshgate car park. This will be achieved with the provision of new residential development benefiting from attractive views of Town Centre Gardens.
	Creation of new active frontage and interface to Town Centre Gardens through redevelopment.
	Critical mass of facilities and activity to stimulate greater use of Town Centre Gardens possibly including a programme of events and activities.
Delivery issues, lead and process	Private-sector developer at Park Place.
	Public-sector led development of leisure and civic uses on the Town Centre Gardens site.
	Youth facilities to be a key component respecting the existing covenant.
	Delivery of new leisure and arts uses linked to the demolition of Leisure Box/ Gordon Craig Theatre as part of the Station Gateway MOA.



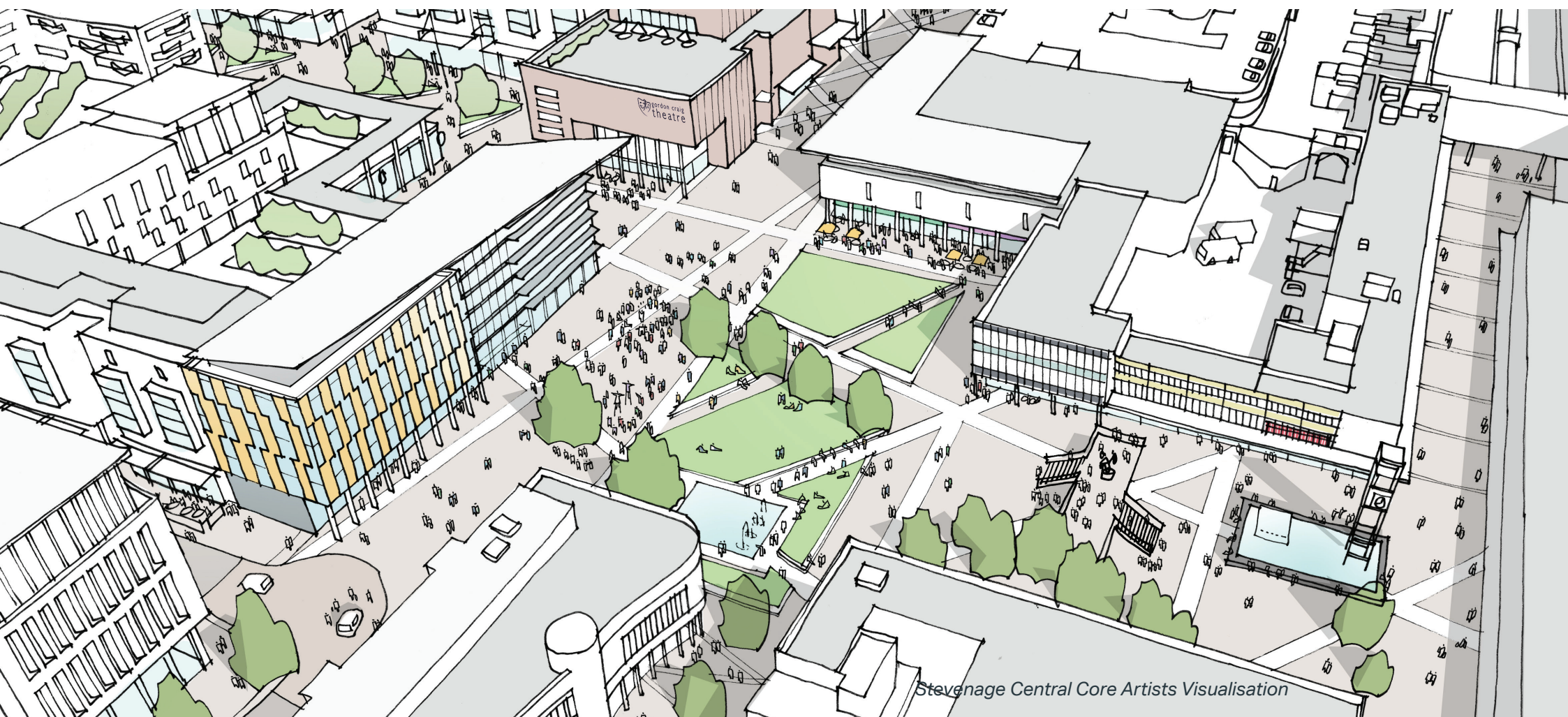
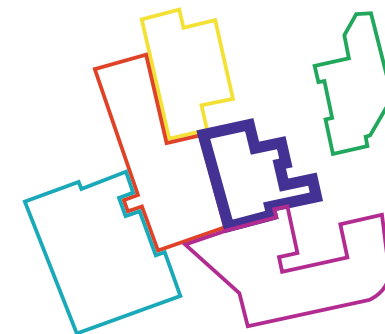
Aerial view of Park Place and Town Centre Gardens MOA

Park Place and Town Centre Gardens Precedents

MOA 4: Stevenage Central Core

2.7.21 This MOA is focused on the Town Square which is the traditional and known heart of the existing town centre. The new Civic Hub is being located on the southern side of the square. This MOA requires major reconfiguration to provide new and direct pedestrian routes from the Town Square through to Station Gateway.

2.7.22 Through the relocation of the current Bus Station, Town Square can be expanded and radically enhanced to deliver a physical transition from the original New Town into an expanded Stevenage Central offer. This also offers the unique opportunity to deliver a major green public space at the heart of Stevenage Central.

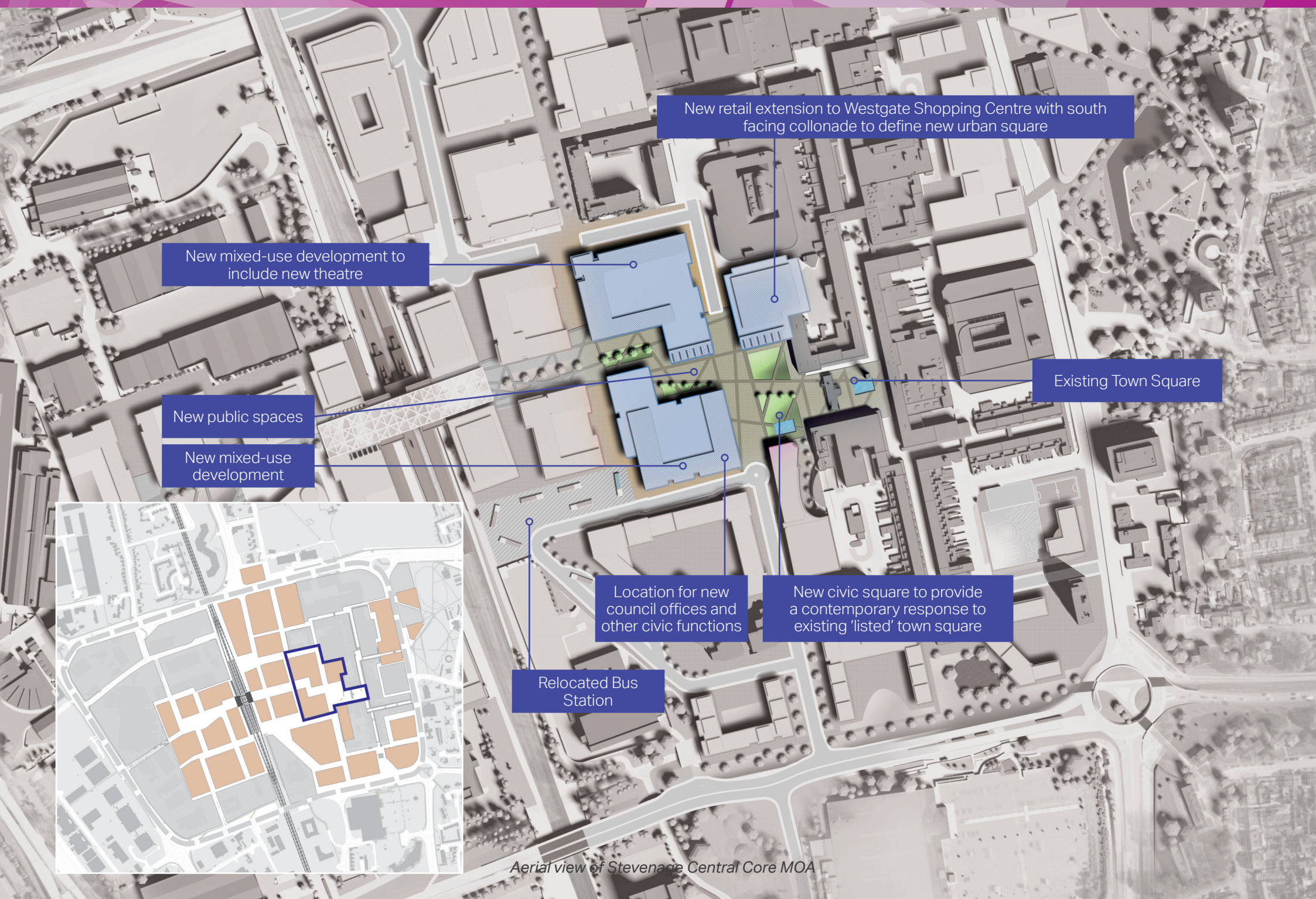


2.7.23 The enhanced Town Square will act as a positive setting in which to attract new development. It facilitates the expansion of the Westgate Shopping Centre where there is known developer interest. This is also the ideal location for a re-provided theatre which will fit within the two lower floors of a new development block fronting the enlarged Town Square. There is the potential with the Civic Hub, new retail space and re-provided theatre to attract many more people into this area, restoring its significance as the heart of the town.

2.7.24 The ambition to establish a new Theatre is recognised by all partners. However, further work will be needed to establish the potential for such a building, the nature of the provision, how it will function and the viability of this in the context of public subsidy.

2.7.25 The existing Council Offices could be redeveloped as part of this scenario. Again, if these were re-provided in this MOA it would retain and potentially add to the activity in this area.

Site area	3.4 ha
Existing use	Town Square, SBC offices, Bus Station, Mecca Bingo, surface car parking, Magistrates Court, retail and offices
Ownership	SBC and various private-sector ownerships
Proposed uses	Signature public space
	Retail
	New Theatre
	Offices
	Residential
	Restaurants and cafes
	Civic uses
Development Capacity	Retail 6,050 m ²
	Offices 10,150 m ²
	Housing 18,900 m ² 223units
	Civic/leisure/cultural 8,000 m ²
Parameters	Building heights will range from 2 storeys to 6 storeys.
	The existing Bus Station will be relocated closer to the Rail Station.
	Continuation of the pedestrian east to west axis linking the Town Square with the Rail Station.
	Radically enhanced and expanded Town Square to act as a focal point for new investment and a statement of investment from old to new.
	Provision will be made for green space within Town Square.
	The design and architecture of new development surrounding the Square will be of the highest quality.
	A new civic hub (including a Library) located adjacent to the Town Square will reinforce its public role and function.
	A new theatre will be located on the north-eastern corner of Town Square generating evening activity.
	Blocks should include active ground-floor uses throughout and particularly onto Town Square and the new east to west axis.
	The layout and alignment of new buildings and spaces should facilitate sequential views and vistas between the Rail Station and the Town Square.
Delivery issues, lead and process	Requires the relocation of the Bus Station in consultation with local bus operators.
	Public sector land assembly through consideration of existing offices, magistrates court and surface-level car parks.
	Negotiation of the relocation of the Mecca Bingo.
	Private-sector led development including Westgate expansion.
	Public/private partnership to deliver new theatre as part of mixed-use development subject to further work.
	Consideration of international design competition for new Town Square.



New retail extension to Westgate Shopping Centre with south facing collonade to define new urban square

New mixed-use development to include new theatre

Existing Town Square

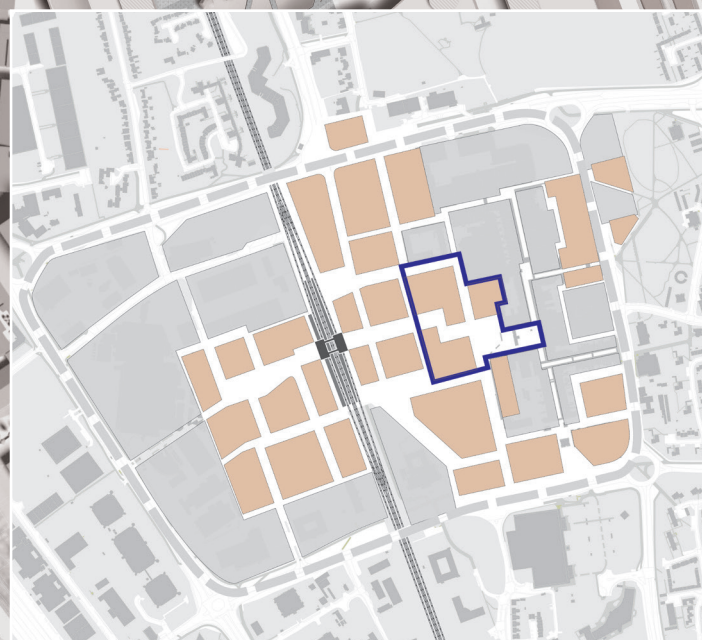
New public spaces

New mixed-use development

Location for new council offices and other civic functions

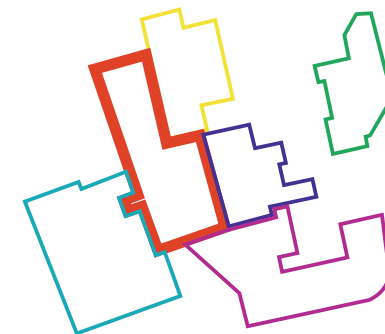
New civic square to provide a contemporary response to existing 'listed' town square

Relocated Bus Station



Aerial view of Stevenage Central Core MOA

Stevenage Central Core Precedents



MOA 5: Station Gateway

2.7.26 Station Gateway MOA is the key to stimulating the demand for office space in Stevenage Central. Lytton Way is proposed to be reconfigured and the land released used to provide development sites close to Stevenage Station. It is essential to create development sites alongside the potential to construct a new station building in response to growing demand as the station develops its role as a key hub Station on the East Coast Mainline. In 2013-2014 passenger numbers were 4,448,308, compared with 4,257,732 in 2008-2009. Available development sites and a modern rail gateway into Stevenage Central are essential pre-requisites to create a market for commercial development.

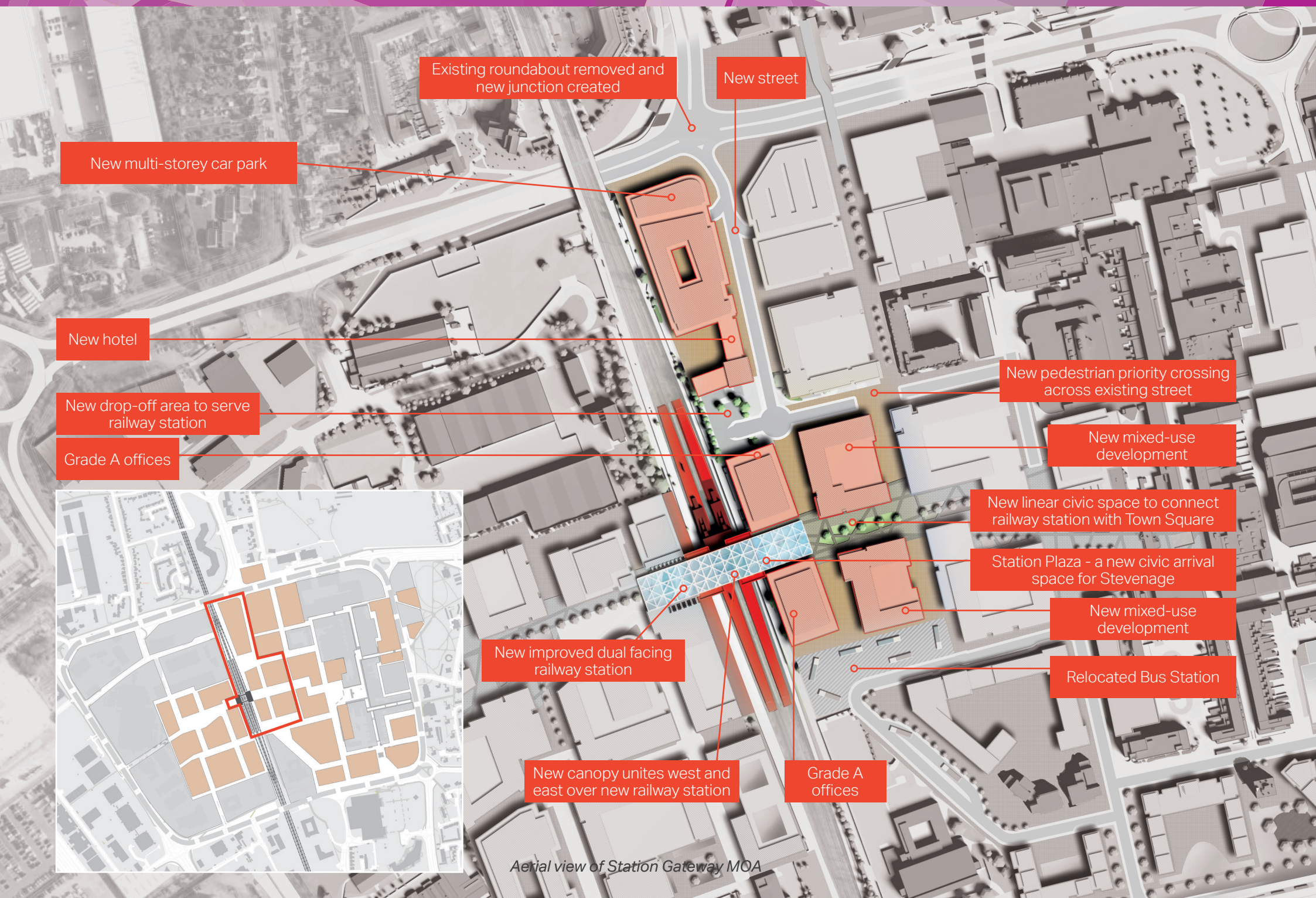
2.7.27 Outside of London the office market remains weak and Stevenage must provide both sites and an environment to compete with comparable locations such as Reading and Milton Keynes. Stevenage enjoys an advantage over both with quicker journey times into London.

2.7.28 Some change and investment will occur in Stevenage if the Station Gateway does not materialise as envisaged in this Stevenage Central Framework. However, without it the town is unlikely to achieve the step change in the economic performance that meets the vision objectives. The reconfiguration of Lytton Way is a bold and irreversible proposal. It will signify the scale of ambition for Stevenage Central. Such a decision, combined with intensive activity on a combined front by the public and private sectors, is the best way to advocate and secure the support and commitment of Network Rail for investment in a new station. The current station is no longer fit for purpose, the recent refurbishment notwithstanding.

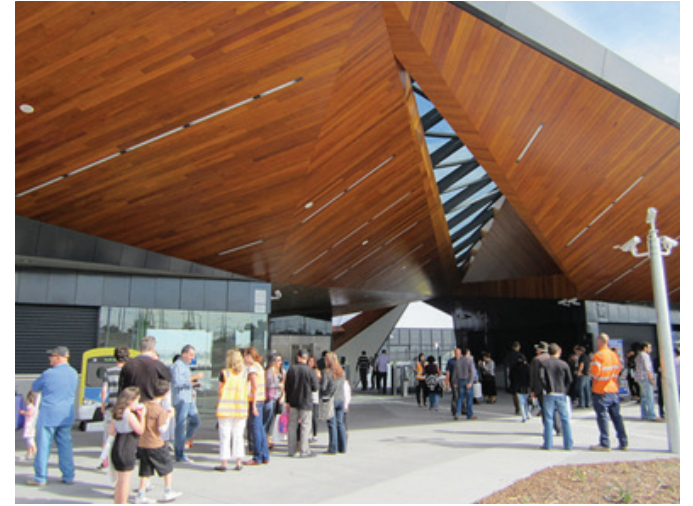
2.7.29 The Leisure Centre and Gordon Craig Theatre will need to be relocated to create development sites and a new physical and visual linkage across the railway line. The new development blocks proposed will frame the approach to the station and have retail and food outlets at ground floor level. In addition, the re-provision of the theatre in the adjacent Central Core MOA will contribute greatly to the footfall and activity in the extended Town Square.

2.7.30 The two blocks adjacent to the station are proposed for high-quality office development. The other two blocks may have more potential for residential use. However, no firm land use decisions need be taken at this point. This is the key area to demonstrate the design quality that is needed to uplift the profile of Stevenage Central and provide a vibrant new Gateway to the town.

Site area	6.6 ha
Existing use	Rail Station, Gordon Craig Theatre and leisure facilities, surface car parking and part of Ring Road (Lytton Way)
Ownership	Network Rail and public sector authorities including SBC and HCC
Proposed uses	New Rail Station New Station Plazas New Bus Station High-quality offices Mixed-use blocks to include retail, residential and offices Multi-storey car park Hotel
Development Capacity	Offices 39,900 m ² Housing 15,600 m ² 184 units Hotel 7,200 m ² Car parking 31,625 m ² 1,054 cps Rail Station building 2,100 m ² Retail, cafes 2,800 m ²
Parameters	Building heights will be 6 storeys surrounding the Rail Station with active frontages onto the new plazas. Removal of Lytton Way and Gordon Craig Theatre to facilitate integration and creation of new development sites. Redeveloped Rail Station and civic plazas to the east and west dual-frontage Station building. High-quality office space will be provided within walking distance of the Station. A multi-storey car park and drop-off space will be provided to the eastern edge of the railway line and north of the Station building for rail passenger convenience. The establishment of a new east-west pedestrian access to Town Square.
Delivery issues, lead and process	Delivery partnership between Network Rail & Govia Thameslink (GTR) with SBC, HCC and Leisure Park owners Network Rail will support the redevelopment of the Rail Station in line with the ongoing endeavour to provide a 5th (terminating) platform. Support from the Leisure Park developers is critical in providing an improved dual entering passenger and non-user access arrangement. Further technical work is now required with transport partners to detail the process for re-configuration and ultimately removal of Lytton Way in its current form.

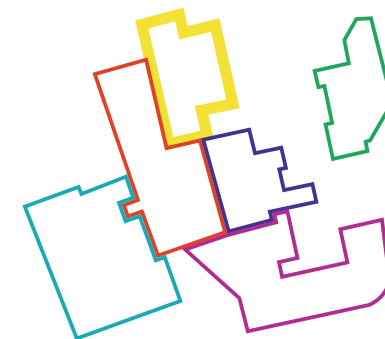


Aerial view of Station Gateway MOA

Station Gateway Precedents



Northgate Artists Visualisation



MOA 6: Northgate

2.7.31 This MOA is currently dominated by the Tesco Store and its associated car parking, together with a Network Rail car park located to the west of Lytton Way. The development potential of this area and the timing of any development is dependent on Tesco's plans for the store. It is understood that the existing store does not meet current needs and redevelopment on a smaller footprint is an option. This would release space for more large footprint retail requirements as an extension to the existing Forum Centre.

2.7.32 To the east of this MOA there are already some larger format retail units grouped around the car park on the corner of Fairlands Way and St George's Way. Given the future prospects for BHS in Stevenage, it may be possible to create a larger grouping across the northern end of Stevenage Central to anchor larger format retail requirements.

- 2.7.33** This is a critical location to enhance the linkages between a revitalised Stevenage Central and the current offer of the Old Town. Through the rationalisation of land uses and creation of new public realm, physical integration can be improved. In particular, the current challenges of level differences at the pedestrian footbridge link across Fairlands Way can be tackled head on.
- 2.7.34** This MOA also provides an opportunity to consolidate a particular retail offer for Stevenage Central, building upon existing stores in this location such as Next and TK Maxx.
- 2.7.35** Through the reconfiguration of Lytton Way with its junction at Fairlands Way, new development sites can be created through the removal of the existing roundabout. Whilst these are some level differences in this location, these are not significant enough to limit development.
- 2.7.36** The character of this area is already changing through the Prior Approval at Brickdale House from office to residential use.

Site area	4.1 ha
Existing use	Tesco Superstore and associated car parking, servicing and filling station, retail, and residential
Ownership	Private-sector ownerships
Proposed uses	Retail
	Foodstore
	Residential
	Offices
	New pedestrian and cycle footbridge
Development Capacity	Offices
	Housing
	Retail
	Car parking
Parameters	Building heights will range from 2 storeys for retail to 6 storeys for office and residential uses.
	Creation of a strong north-south pedestrian/cycle link/green corridor connecting the Old Town with Stevenage Central via an upgraded 'green bridge' over Fairlands Way.
	New development will provide active frontage to face on to new north-south corridor.
	Provision of a new urban format foodstore.
	Pedestrian priority crossing will be provided over Swingate.
	View corridors to be created through the alignment of new built form along the north-south and east-west routes.
Delivery issues, lead and process	Dependent upon the reconfiguration of the Tesco store.
	Development by private sector landowners.

New residential development to provide continuity in the Old Town

Existing roundabout removed and new junction created

New compact Tesco food store with decked parking

New pedestrian and cycle bridge over Fairlands Way

New pedestrian only street

New larger format retail floorspace

New street

Existing offices converted to residential

New mixed-use development

Aerial view of Northgate MOA

Northgate Precedents

MOA's Development Sequencing:

2.7.37 It would be premature to suggest a simplistic development programme. However, the amount of change and new development proposed is very significant, will take many years to complete and extend across the timespan of the emerging Local Plan.

2.7.38 There is, however, a robust approach to the sequencing of MOA development that reflects a current view of where and how change might occur.

A. Southgate Park

B. Central West

C. Park Place and Town Centre Gardens

D. Stevenage Central Core

E. Station Gateway

F. Northgate

2.7.39 The first three MOAs are relatively independent development opportunities which are not physically linked and can be brought forward in any order. Station Gateway, Stevenage Central Core and Northgate are much more interlinked in terms of both function and form. They all depend upon the reconfiguration of Lytton Way in order to free up space to allow suggested new buildings to be constructed.

2.7.40. Whilst the above indicative sequencing reflects a relatively pragmatic view of how development might be brought forward, key opportunities can, and should be responded to as they arise. In particular, discussions on a new rail station and associated development are progressing well. Should this be able to be brought forward earlier than indicated then this would be a major positive statement about the future of Stevenage Central and a catalyst for other investments.



2.8 Regeneration Plan Interventions and Sustainability

Regeneration Plan Interventions

2.8.1 The Regeneration Plan interventions are summarised below.

MOVEMENT

M1. Rail Station

Intervention	Redevelopment of the existing Rail Station
	High quality, accessible and functional structure
	Double-sided structure enabling through station connectivity

M2. Bus Station, Operations and Movement

Intervention	Relocation and redevelopment of a new bus station/interchange, plus separate layover area
	New structure providing a functional arrangement for both bus operators and bus users
	Revised access and egress arrangements

M3. Lytton Way and Town Centre Ring Road

Intervention	Reconfiguration and removal of Lytton Way as a through route for town centre general traffic
	Reconfiguration of junctions at Six Hills Way and Fairfields Way
	Reconfiguration of junctions to include at-grade crossings for pedestrians and cyclists to improve connectivity
	Signal controlled staggered junction at Six Hills Way
	Signal controlled junction at Fairlands Way

M4. Parking and Servicing

Intervention	To improve the efficiency of car park layouts, particularly altering surface car parks to multi-storey car parks where appropriate
	To ensure "front-of-house" servicing is minimised and Stevenage Central develops a clear, deliverable and enforceable servicing management structure/strategy
	To provide effective parking and servicing information as part of a coherent strategy

M5. Connections beyond Stevenage Central & Wayfinding

Intervention	Removal of some grade-separated pedestrian and cycle access points into the town centre at the Ring Road
	Provision of Cycle-Hubs at key destinations
	Town centre wide Wayfinding strategy

M6. Travel Demand Management, including a 'Green Bus Service'

Intervention	Working with a network of key employers to adopt a mini version of the successful 'Get Ahead of the Games' approach used for travel planning during the London 2012 Olympic Games to effectively manage demand for road space.
	Encourage businesses to work in partnership with SBC to promote modal shift away from single occupancy car use.
	Implementing a package of sustainable transport needs, including a high-quality sustainable bus link that links key employment areas of Stevenage with the town centre
	Offer enhanced bus service information at businesses and via technological aids

LAND USE

LU1. Stevenage Central Planning Policy

Intervention	Stevenage Central Planning Policy to reflect the ambitions of the Regeneration Plan.
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PUBLIC REALM**PR1. Town Square**

Intervention	To refurbish and expand the Town Square.
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PR2. Station Arrival Plazas

Intervention	Creation of two new high quality public squares as arrival gateways from the new Rail Station
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PR3. Southgate Park

Intervention	Creation of a high quality green corridor for recreation purposes and a setting for residential development.
	Enhance the southern green corridor to encourage cycling and walking in Stevenage Central.
	Improve connectivity between employment at Gunnels Wood and Stevenage Central.

PR4. Public Realm, Wayfinding and Architectural Lighting Strategy

Intervention	To develop a new strategy for and manage a coordinated programme of public realm enhancements.
	To enhance the legibility of Stevenage Central and the experience for people living, working and visiting Stevenage.
	To protect and enhance important vistas to local landmarks such as The Towers and The Church of St George and St Andrew to aid legibility.

HERITAGE**H1. Enhancing Existing Built Heritage Features**

Intervention	A programme of repairs and restoration for canopies, decorative panels and windows within the Conservation Area.
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H2. Heritage Design Guide for New Development

Intervention	Preparation of a short targeted and user-friendly Heritage Design Guide for Stevenage.
	Care needs to be taken to ensure this Guide is presented positively and not be seen by the private sector as a potential blockage to investment.

MAJOR OPPORTUNITY AREAS

MOA 1 – Southgate Park

Intervention	Creation of a new residential quarter for Stevenage Central through the redevelopment of existing public-sector land uses to include:
	New urban housing
	New linear park
	Urban primary school

MOA 2 – Central West

Intervention	Transformation of existing Leisure Park to a new mixed-use urban quarter connected through a new Rail Station to form part of Stevenage Central to include:
	High density development
	Network of streets and spaces
	Greater mix of uses

MOA 3 – Park Place and Town Centre Gardens

Intervention	Creation of a new focal point to the east of Stevenage Central connecting Town Centre Gardens with new development opportunities to include:
	Consolidated leisure and civic uses
	Reconsidered St George's Way
	Mixed-use, retail and residential development

MOA 4 – Stevenage Central Core

Intervention	Reinvigorating the heart of Stevenage Central through an enhanced and expanded Town Square and associated new development to include:
	Relocation of the Bus Station
	A new signature public space
	Mixed-use development opportunities

MOA 5 – Station Gateway

Intervention	A new Gateway for Stevenage comprising of a redeveloped Rail Station and civic spaces alongside new commercial development to include:
	New Rail Station
	Two new Plazas
	Demolition of existing theatre and leisure box
	New mixed-use office-led development

MOA 6 – Northgate

Intervention	Radically enhancing connectivity between Stevenage Central and the Old Town through public realm improvements and reconfiguration of development to include:
	New pedestrian/cycle green bridge
	Reconfigured Tesco store
	New mixed-use retail-led development

Sustainability

2.8.2 The proposals for Stevenage Central will reinforce the fundamental role of the town as one of the most important urban centres in Hertfordshire. The effect of the Stevenage Central concept will be to strengthen the economic, residential and social functions of the town. Creating the conditions for Stevenage to fulfil its true potential will greatly contribute to the overall sustainability of a much wider area. Full use will be made of the existing infrastructure of the town which is capable of supporting a significantly higher level of population and economic activity than currently exists. Increasing the residential capacity of the town will also help minimise the construction of housing in much less sustainable locations.

2.8.3 Stevenage Central will be a highly sustainable development. This will be achieved by enhancing public transport connections, offering a mixed community the opportunity to live and work within the area and encouraging the sustainable design, construction and operation of buildings. Stevenage Central approaches this complex issue by considering the performance of the site in terms of three key issues, with a particular emphasis on environmental sustainability:

1. Transportation;
2. Social and economic characteristics; and
3. Sustainable design, construction and operation of buildings.

Transportation

2.8.4 The Stevenage Central proposals are in accordance with national, regional and local transport and planning policies. The rationale that underpins the transport proposals for Stevenage Central have been developed using an area wide approach including:

- » redeveloping Stevenage Station incorporating reconfigured track, signalling, platforms and entrances;
- » enhancing the local transport interchange(s), incorporating facilities for the disabled, buses, coaches, taxis, cycles, kiss and ride/short stay car parking; and
- » promotion of high-density development around and integral to the railway station and transport interchanges, incorporating a high quality public realm of streets and squares.

2.8.5 The design approach has been to ensure that new development can take advantage of the high accessibility levels that exist around the station. Some 4.3 million rail passengers use the Station each year. The potential to reduce the use of the car is immense. Similar principles will apply to the use of the offices, retail and cultural facilities proposed to be located nearby.

Socio-economic characteristics

2.8.6 There is an immense opportunity for synergy and for residents to live and work in the same location. In addition, developing centrally located office space adjacent to Stevenage Station will reduce the pressure for less sustainable out of town office development. The Station will be placed at the core of the town's transport network and so will enable employees to access the site by sustainable public transport modes, in addition to walking and cycling.

Sustainable Design & Construction

2.8.7 A key factor underpinning Stevenage Central has been the approach to sustainable design, construction and operation. Stevenage Central will use an energy hierarchy to promote an energy hierarchy as follows. This is based on:

- » reducing energy use, in particular by the use of sustainable design and construction measures;
- » supplying energy efficiently and giving priority to decentralised energy supply; and
- » making use of renewable energy.

